Camillus de Lellis, the Hospital Saint

by Sister Mary Camilla Lyons

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Early Life

Though we may not, according to the Churches interpretation of the First Commandment, place our faith in dreams, still it is not unlikely that mothers of earlier and more pious generations were often permitted by an all-wise Providence to know, through dreams, something of the destiny of certain of their children previous to the birth of those children. Instances of such favors are related in the lives of many of the saints and there is no reason to doubt that a dream of extraordinary significance was thus given to the mother of Saint Camillus de Lellis. She saw, say his biographers, a child with a red cross stamped upon his breast. He was followed by a multitude of other children all bearing the same sign.

Far from being consoled, the Lady Camilla, we are told, was grievously troubled by this vision. Might it not be a portent of disaster to her family, in the birth of an unworthy son? Should she, then, have the misfortune to bring into the world a child who would dishonor her name?

The wondrous tale of the Hermit, followed by his red-crossed babes, must have been known to her, yet her anxious mother-heart either failed to recall it or saw in it no cause for comfort.

One son, given her in the early days of her wedded life, had been willingly, even joyfully returned at the call of the Giver. What greater happiness could she wish for her child than that which is the lot of little children taken before the world has had a chance to place its mark upon them? With the wisdom and the piety of a mother's far-sighted love she had freely given up this boy, and spent many years of utter

loneliness, for the life of her soldier husband demanded much absence from home.

Unfortunately for the wedded happiness of Camilla Compellia, this noble Roman lady had married a man who, while inheriting an illustrious name, nobly borne by a long line of soldierly ancestors, possessed little else to recommend him. Giovanni de Lellis had acquired all the vices of a soldier's life, a fact of which his wife could not long remain in ignorance, and only his frequent absences from home rendered her fate endurable. Hence her fear lest any son born of this union might inherit the unlovely qualities of a dissolute father.

Besides, she was old now, too old to hope for the birth of another child, yet it seemed to be God's design to make her once more a mother. Nearly sixty years of age, she was gray and wrinkled. "Saint Elizabeth," they called her, and spoke in hushed tones as of one chosen by God for some special mark of favor.

A few days after the dream just related, at Bacchianico in the kingdom of Naples, on the twenty-fifth day of May, 1550, there came into the world the child of predilection, the saint who was to teach what Christ meant when He said, "I was sick and you visited Me." And yet the twelve first years of the child's life, all that were given his anxious mother to watch over him, were far from consoling or reassuring. The dream of the children of the red cross became an ever present dread, and her prayers and penances for her son's welfare were unremitting.

The little Camillus was a strange, unprepossessing child, showing little inclination for gentle or scholarly pursuits. The restless, roving, militant nature of his father seemed to be his inheritance, and from his earliest years he longed only

for the time when he should fare forth with that father to embrace a soldier's life.

He was scarcely more than twelve years old when the end came for his venerable mother. Then followed a few years of training in the schools, accomplished much against the will of the impatient boy, and at last he was free to join his father.

Ah, the period that followed! It was one that angels wept to behold. An apt scholar for the vices of camp and field, he walked his dissolute way, and until he was nineteen years of age his associates were among the most lawless and recreant youths of the time. An ungovernable passion for gaming possessed him, and, with no one to restrain him, for his father was more comrade than parent, he, too, was soon a "soldier of fortune." Together this luckless pair wandered from one country to another, offering their services to friend or foe, Turk or Christian as it chanced.

At last Giovanni de Lellis was stricken with a dangerous disease and Camillus, too, became ill, though not so seriously. After a few weeks' illness they recovered sufficiently to travel and they resolved to return at once to their home in Abruzzo. Accordingly, they set out, but Camillus soon perceived that his father was in no condition to travel - that he was, in fact, apparently dying; so he hurried him to the home of a friend which happened to be near by.

Here they were courteously received and generously cared for and Giovanni de Lellis had the happy opportunity of seeing a priest and of repairing, by a good death, the evil life he had led. The mercy shown to the good thief was once more shown to a sinner. Who shall say why?

Seeing his father brought to repentance, Camillus was deeply affected and moved to consider the state of his own soul. After attending to the last duties he could perform for his father he proceeded on his journey homeward. He had by no means recovered from his illness; moreover, what he had thought a mere scratch on his right leg was giving definite signs of infection and his condition became quite pitiable.

He tried to drag himself on to the journey's end, but the fever in his veins obliged him to rest. While at Fermo, the thoughts awakened by his father's death began to pursue him once more. They were given a more decided trend by his seeing a couple of Franciscan Fathers passing, with every mark of devout recollection.

Camillus' mind became, at once, a tumult of devout desires. He remembered suddenly, an uncle, Fra Paolo Lauretana, who, it was said, was a great and holy man and of much influence in the Franciscan Order. He would go to him and, no doubt, would obtain assistance and advice. But Fra Paolo Lauretana, while he was, as has been said, a great and holy man, was also a man of penetration, and, though he received his nephew kindly, he perceived in him signs that made him resolve to study the boy a bit before admitting him to the Order. He therefore detained Camillus for a while and finally concluded that weak health and a very indeterminate vocation were not desirable assets for a son of Saint Francis. Much as he disliked to follow this course, the commissary general was obliged to dismiss his nephew. Camillus, hurt by the dismissal, made up his mind to think no more of the religious life, notwithstanding a vow that he had made, just after his father's death, to become a Franciscan.

And so it would seem as if the soft glow of light just dawning in Camillus' soul was destined to fade without showing him

the path to tread. He was crushed and embittered, and having no one of whom to seek counsel, he turned once more to his former companions, and surrendered himself to his old habit of gaming.

A sorry spectacle he presented, a soldier with a bandaged leg! If it were a wound received in battle he might glory in it, but alas, it was a sore produced by a slight scratch. The infection was obstinate, and the bad result seemed destined to be permanent. He became extremely sensitive to his infirmity and went about from place to place to escape recognition.

Finally he drifted to Rome. Having heard that there were skillful surgeons at the hospital of San Giacomo, Camillus determined to seek admittance, offering himself as a servant and hoping thus to procure the treatment needed for his wound.

He was not disappointed in this, for he was given a trial, and for a while labored industriously, but the old temptation assailed him before long. Those among the servants who knew nothing of gambling, he taught, and soon a general neglect of duty set in. It was not long before the instigator of the mischief was discovered, and a much thumbed pack of cards, found under his pillow, speedily put an end to Camillus' services at San Giacomo.

Discharged, with his wound half healed, homeless again and knowing not where to turn, he was in a sorry plight, this aspirant to the religious life, this son of soldiers and scholars, this child of saintly destiny.

There was nothing for it but to return to the life of his first choice, so a soldier of fortune he became once more. In the Venetian army he served in some posts of distinction, but his

glory was usually short-lived, for he could not resist the temptation to join in every wild soldier's orgy that was set afoot. He encountered all sorts of perils, and his recklessness brought him more than once to death's door.

On such occasions, a spirit of compunction would seize him and he would vow to renounce his lawless way of living. But what reliance could be placed upon the vows of this impetuous youth? The vow that he had made to become a Franciscan had been renewed or forgotten with every wind of good or ill fortune that had befallen him since his father's death. At one time he seemed to feel the impulse of God's grace calling him to the Capuchin Order, at another, though destitute of clothing, he would not accept a piece of cloth, a gift from a Capuchin friar, lest it might end in being made into a Capuchin habit which he should be forced to wear.

Among his companions was one for whom he had a strange affection and whose influence over him was so great that he would do nothing unsanctioned by this friend and counselor. A pair of ne'er-do-wells, they wandered about, generally half starved, ill clothed, and often forced to beg from passers-by.

On one occasion they were begging near the door of a church, when they were accosted by a man who was passing. He was a man of noble birth who gave much of his wealth to works of charity. Just then he was inspecting a new building which he was having erected for a Capuchin monastery near by. Something about Camillus attracted him, and he spoke to the youth, whose face flushed with shame at being addressed, while in such plight, by one of the class to which he himself properly belonged.

Did he need employment? Surely he did; sadly needed it. Would he join the laborers upon the Capuchin building? Ah,

that was different; he must consult his precious comrade; get his consent and his company, if possible.

Promising to return shortly, he went in search of his companion, who had just left him. Very little persuasion on the part of this worthy was needed to induce Camillus to abandon the idea of becoming a laborer, and he failed to return to the friend whom God had sent to his rescue. The life of vagabondage, though it entailed hardships beyond those of warfare, held him because of the companionship it afforded of so many others who were victims of the passion that had thus far ruined all his undertakings - the passion of gambling.

But at last grace triumphed. Suddenly, as they journeyed on, Camillus felt the sting of remorse. Actuated by a strong impulse to return to the spot where he felt sure God had already spoken to him in the guise of a stranger, a would-be benefactor, he tried at first to induce his companion to return with him, but finding this impossible, he finally dashed aside the barrier of human respect and set out alone. So fearful was he of being lured again by the tempter to sure destruction, that he covered the entire distance of twelve miles almost without resting, and running the greater part of the way. Without much difficulty he found his benefactor, and was soon safely housed and fed, an accepted laborer.

The trials and temptations that beset this poor weakling, in the first days of his return to right living, were such as Satan uses to repair his losses. It was a humiliating life, to say the least, this driving the beast to carry stone, lime, and other materials needed by the builders. Camillus, at his best, was no lover of work, and this occupation was especially repugnant to his finer instincts, which rebelled with force and persistence.

But this was not his worst difficulty. One day, who should appear in the midst of the laborers but his whilom friend, Tiberio, stuccoed with whitewash, apparently minded to be an artisan and nothing else.

Camillus was not to be deceived this time, however; he recognized the tempter and carefully avoided his wily friend, than whom none was apparently more industrious.

A few days of such strenuous application and good behavior proved quite enough for Tiberio, and seeing that Camillus meant to persevere he departed as unostentatiously as he had come.

It was another triumph of grace for Camillus, But the end of his trial was not yet. The suffering caused by the wound in his leg was incessant, but it was tolerable compared to what he suffered in his mind from the humiliations that God permitted him to endure.

He was destined for great sanctity, and only great humiliations fit the soul for this higher state. The wound in his leg was to cost him dear, but it was destined to repay him in the coin of the Kingdom.

The Vocation

With a tenacity that no ordinary resolution could explain, day after day Camillus struggled unfalteringly on at his distasteful task. His determination was to earn enough money to enable him to join once more some military expedition, and this time to distinguish himself, and retrieve the name of his family, which he had brought as low as possible.

He still went about ragged and unkempt, too proud to accept what was as yet unearned, and too occupied with thoughts and plans for the future to care that he was an object of curiosity to his fellow workmen and of derision to the children who gathered around to watch the builders.

In all his planning there entered not once - or, if at all, only to be rejected - the remembrance of his promise to give his services to a cause nobler and better than any having mere worldly ends. Indeed, to human judgment, it would seem that this cause would be less likely than the other to gain by the adherence of so capricious a defender.

To his companions in the daily toil, Camillus never spoke, but he would sometimes exchange a few words with the friars who began to be interested in the youth, and who occasionally entrusted him with a commission for the monastery.

One day he was sent on an errand to another house of the Order, at such a distance that he was obliged to remain there over night. Among the friars at this house, there was one, Fra Angelo, the father guardian, who seemed strangely drawn to the queer, tall, bashful messenger sent to him, and who made every effort to draw Camillus into" conversation.

That evening as they sat in one of the arbors of the garden, Fra Angelo asked some simple question about a wound on Camillus' wrist, evidently a sabre cut. Gradually the whole story of the young man's past was unfolded, his face burning with shame, as one wretched detail after another was confided to the good priest.

With Fra Angelo's clear, gentle gaze upon him, it seemed impossible to refrain from telling all, and he was repaid for doing so by the interest and the warm, affectionate sympathy that met his disclosures. Before they parted that night, Camillus felt his heart touched by the words of Fra Angelo to such effect that he could not rest, but stood by the window of his little room, or paced the floor waiting for the day to break that he might return to Manfredonia, and with his usual impulsiveness, begin at once to put in force the good resolutions with which he seemed consumed.

The last shaft of God's grace had not yet, however, reached him. It was while riding homeward next morning that, like that other impetuous rider, rushing headlong upon the road to Damascus, he suddenly heard a voice. It spoke within, so clearly and distinctly that he stopped, dismounted and kneeling upon the roadside, cried out to God to make known His will. The whole wretched past seemed to unroll before him as a scroll, and words of contrition burned upon his lips while he knelt there striking his breast with a kind of frenzied remorse.

Suddenly there fell upon his ears the sound of bells from a neighboring church tower. They were as joy bells rung by angels to commemorate the victory of this sinner wrested from the toils of Satan and restored to his inheritance. He remembered that it was the feast of Our Lady's Purification, and earnestly he called upon Mary to aid him in the new life that lay before him.

Who shall say that mothers' prayers for wayward sons are ever lost? The world had already to its account the example of another youth, a greater sinner even than Camillus, restored to grace through the persevering prayers of a holy mother, united with the intercession of that wondrous friend of mothers - Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

Now, indeed, the vision of Camilla de Lellis was to reveal its significance. Through long, painful years her son was to expiate the unworthy period of his life, and then, gathering about him devout men with a vocation like his own, to lead them valiantly in the crusade for souls. Never was this waverer to turn back again. He was to go steadily forward in the way of perfection.

With what speed he could make, Camillus finished his journey and presented himself at once to the father guardian. Kneeling humbly at the feet of the friar, he told all that had happened to him on his journey, with enough of the history of the past to convince his listener of the reality of his vocation.

In accordance with God's manifest design, Camillus was assured that everything possible should be done to procure for him the habit when the father provincial should arrive at the monastery.

Satisfied with this promise, but burning with the desire to begin his life of reparation, the eager aspirant began at once to practise the most austere virtues. He was now in his twenty-fifth year, strange and gaunt and tall - so tall that the fathers playfully called him "Cristoforo." As a matter of fact, Saint Christopher, the giant child-bearer, who is said to keep watch over the unwary near the dangerous currents of life, seemed really (upon one occasion at least) to have a special guard over the client thus consigned to him.

It is told that while on the way to Triviento, to enter the novitiate of the Order, he was obliged to ford a stream of which he knew nothing. He was almost half across when he distinctly heard a voice cry: "Do not do it; do not do it; do not go over." He looked around but saw no one. Considering it, however, a merciful intervention of Providence, perhaps the voice of that Christopher to whom he had been likened, he at once turned back. It was late in the evening and as there was no other way of pursuing his journey, he was forced to sleep all night in the open. The next morning he traveled on foot and, falling in with other travelers, he learned that had he persevered in his attempt to cross the river he would most certainly have been drowned, as the place he had chosen could not be passed alive.

At Triviento Camillus saw the fulfilment of his hopes. Father Montefero, the provincial, was easily convinced of the earnestness of the postulant, of whose singular graces he had heard with much satisfaction, and very soon permitted him to begin his novitiate.

The memory of his past excesses seemed to Camillus to demand from him greater sacrifices, greater self-effacement than that practised by his brother novices. The "humble brother," they called him, and marveled at the generosity of God, who will not be outdone by His creatures but gives grace after grace to those who show themselves ready to accept all.

The unhealed wound in Camillus' leg was his only cause of anxiety at this time. He had mentioned it to the provincial at the time of his admittance, for well he knew that the Capuchin rule forbade the reception of subjects with incurable complaints.

No fear of its permanency was entertained by the good Father Montefero, who even said that he himself had been healed of a similar affliction by the very reception of the habit. Ah, how earnestly Camillus hoped that he might be thus favored!

Only disappointment was in store for him, however, for not only was he not cured, but his wound, irritated by the rubbing of the habit against it, rapidly grew worse, and he soon found himself obliged to hear the inevitable sentence of dismissal.

Who can picture the grief of the poor young man as the bitter truth forced itself upon him! He was to be rejected as an unsuitable member. Would God abandon him in this hour of need, the God whom he was learning to know and love so ardently?

But he was learning, too, another lesson, that love without suffering is a trifling thing to offer to Him who taught us the infinite value of pain as an atoning power, and whose sufferings were infinitely beyond any He permits His creatures.

He had found, moreover, a sweetness, a peace and joy, contrasted with which the pleasure so called by the world appeared in all its horrid reality.

Bravely, then, Camillus faced the hard necessity of leaving the novitiate, which he had come to regard as a safe refuge from the temptations that had hitherto proved irresistible. Consoled by the promise that should his wound heal, he might return to the novitiate, Camillus determined to seek the aid he needed at the hospital of San Giacomo. His wound had been almost cured there, and he was sure that under new conditions an entire cure would be effected.

The zeal and earnestness with which he undertook the service of the sick this second time soon won for him the respect and confidence of the directors of the hospital as well as the love of the patients. Truly here was a change. Some of the officers who remembered the wild, undisciplined lover of the card-table could only be convinced by his extraordinary height that he was the same, this gentle, devout attendant of the sick.

At the time of this return to Rome, Camillus had the unusual privilege of choosing as his confessor one whose fame for sanctity was well known to him, the great Saint Philip Neri. But Saint Philip, it seems, had his hands full with his tall penitent, whose conscience, while it was as easy to direct as that of a child in most matters, in one was anything but docile. He was convinced that it was his duty to return as soon as possible to the Capuchins. On this point he clung to his own opinion with an obstinacy that baffled all Saint Philip*s efforts to guide him. The saint endeavored to dissuade him, telling him he would not persevere, and even prophesying that his wound, almost cured, would trouble him again.

Camillus could not rid himself of the scruple he felt this time at not fulfilling a vow. It was a struggle between saint and scruple and the scruple won.

All turned out as Saint Philip had predicted. Camillus' wound being pronounced quite healed, he was received once more in the Capuchin novitiate and, alas, dismissed therefrom after four months, this time with a certificate in his hand which read thus: "Camillus de Lellis of Bacchianico is rendered ineligible to our Order by an incurable complaint in one of his legs," etc., etc., closing in due form "this 26th day of November, 1550, in our convent at Rome," and signed "Fra Giovanni Maria ut supra manu propria."

One would imagine that our aspirant to the Capuchin life might now feel satisfied that he had done his best to fulfill his vow, and that he might yield to God's manifest will, but it was not until he had been provided with a similar certificate by a second house of the Order that he finally desisted.

Upon his return to his spiritual director, "the cheerful saint" gave him a hilarious greeting, which those familiar with Saint Philip's ways can easily imagine. "God bless you, Camillus, did I not tell you to give up the thought of being a Capuchin?" Camillus replied humbly that since God had made it impossible for him to persevere, there could no longer be a doubt as to His will in the matter.

Back to San Giacomo, his old refuge, he went. Here he was hailed with great satisfaction. He had before been appointed superintendent of the wards and now he was speedily restored to his office. Its duties had been so perfectly fulfilled that the whole order of affairs at the hospital had changed, the most perfect discipline prevailing where before all had been chaos.

In the time of Camillus the public hospital was far from being the perfect work that it is today; and none was more painfully aware of its defects than he. Even in the days of his initiation into hospital duties, when he cared less about work than about play, and perhaps better then than at any other time, he knew how defective was the attention of the subordinates at the hospital of San Giacomo. It is undeniably true that "it takes a rogue to catch a rogue," and unflattering as the implication may be, it was doubtless that with the knowledge born in the days of his own apprenticeship he knew where reform was needed.

On being reappointed superintendent his first act was to search out the delinquents among the orderlies. He scorned no method which would accomplish so worthy an end. That he might satisfy himself as to the treatment given the poor patients during the night, he concealed himself between the ward beds, and watched with astonishment and horror the efforts of the sufferers to get the necessary attention. Neglected and even abandoned, their moans were most pitiful, and Camillus resolved that, with God's help, this state of things should not continue. He saw the unclean condition of wards and beds, the little care taken to avoid contagion, the patients permitted to suffer from hunger and thirst. He even learned that so great was the agony of the thirsty that they sought relief by drinking medicine which had been left carelessly within reach, and even oil from the lamps. Worst of all, the sick were allowed to die without the sacraments or even the prayers which the Church prescribes for the comfort and help of her dying children. Indeed, the dying were often left quite alone in their extremity, if the agony lasted too long to suit the ruthless attendants. There was ground for suspicion too that on more than one occasion the living were buried with the dead.

Camillus himself prevented one such horror. It was customary to remove those who had breathed their last to a special room to await burial, and here Camillus found among the bodies a man still breathing; he helped to remove him to his bed, where the patient lived five days longer. It is highly probable that occurrences of this sort were quite frequent. Moreover, it was a state of things not peculiar to the hospital of San Giacomo, for few hospitals of the time were better off. It seems almost incredible that anything passing for hospital management could, even in those remote days, have permitted such atrocities as those that are recorded. It is not impossible, however, for even our modern institutions, some of the very best of them, have had within the past half

century to reform conditions nearly as deplorable as those of the Middle Ages, and this in the very centres of civilization.

Harrowed and perplexed by what he saw, Camillus stood face to face with a great problem. The work to be done, the evils to be remedied, he knew himself to be utterly unable to attack single-handed. That it was a task for men he knew, priests if possible, yet he himself was not a priest. Alas, how bitterly he deplored the last years that now made it seem so unlikely that he should ever be one! This was no time, however, for vain regret; he must set about finding a few good men, willing to devote themselves for Christ's sake to caring properly for the wretched sufferers who were within reach. It is so easy to waste time in deploring impossible achievements for the betterment of mankind while we overlook the good near at hand that a little humble striving might accomplish for the real glory of God.

There were among the servers in the hospital a few worthy. God-fearing men. Camillus knew them by that instinctive keenness that causes one good man to recognize another. He chose five of whose virtue he was certain and communicated to them the thoughts and plans that had been gradually taking shape in his mind. He found them all of his own way of thinking, all eager to serve God in His suffering poor, and all willing to enter the campaign against the evils that prevailed in the hospital, under a leader so able and so devoted to the holy cause proposed. Camillus assured them that only prayer would open the way for them. He did not tell them of his own long night vigils when prayers and tears of atonement were interrupted only that the cruel knotted cord might descend with relentless stroke upon his emaciated body, becoming more fleshless day by day for want of proper nourishment, denied it in the same penitential spirit. Neither did he tell them of the band of tin with the perforations like those of a grater, that he had worn

about his waist for many days at a time. These expiatory acts were the means by which he sought to make himself worthy to labor for the merciful God who had brought him to a knowledge of his guilt while it was yet time.

And soon it came about that in a quiet, remote room of the great busy hospital of San Giacomo a little secret society was formed and its five holy conspirators inaugurated their campaign for souls. With loving hands they erected a humble shrine, and there, before an image of the Crucified, Camillus and his companions sought the strength for their great work that there alone could be found. Several times in the day they assembled in their oratory, recited litanies and other prayers, and took the discipline, after which Camillus exhorted his followers to deeds of zeal and piety.

But all this had been accomplished without the knowledge and sanction of the hospital authorities. Camillus, in the simplicity of his soul, felt that to do God's work in this particular way no such sanction was needed; and in truth, at this period of his life, the opinions that he held, he held with extraordinary tenacity, as was shown in this instance.

It was not long before word of what was going on in the remote room of prayer was carried to the directors of the hospital, and they promptly put an end to the pious efforts of the apostles of the wards. Camillus was ordered to remove his shrine from where he had placed it and to disband his followers. This he was very loath to do and he even went so far as to tell his companions that if they were not permitted to do God's work in that hospital they must seek another. He had not yet learned the value of the gospel precept that "all authority is from God" and should be respected accordingly. But Saint Philip Neri, his confessor, knew it, and getting wind of affairs, he went to his penitent and remonstrated with him. In all humility and with the utmost reverence

Camillus assured his director that his mission was from God and that he must not abandon it. To this idea he clung with such persistence that Saint Philip felt bound to give up directing the conscience of his strange penitent and he sent him to another director. Camillus submitted to the change with much grief, but with the firm conviction that his work had been entrusted to him by God.

Some years afterward, when all Italy rang with the praises of the heroic work of the Ministers of the Sick and especially of their devoted founder, Camillus de Lellis, Saint Philip generously hastened to his former penitent to congratulate him, and to give him his blessing and encouragement.

To do the work in the hospital of San Giacomo, however, Camillus and his friends were not permitted, so their little oratory was reluctantly dismantled and their pious gatherings ceased for a time. Not so the thoughts and plans of Camillus. On the contrary, the idea of founding a Congregation of religious men who should devote their lives to the service of the sick grew stronger and clearer in his mind and since for this purpose it would be necessary to be ordained, ordained, with God*s help, he would be.

Here was a man of thirty-two years of age with scarcely the rudiments of an ordinary education, to say nothing of the knowledge requisite for the priesthood, ready at the divine call to make every effort that a generous response might demand. Bravely he took up the necessary elementary studies while still pursuing his work in the hospital wards, then with superhuman humility entered the junior classes at one of the Jesuit colleges, and patiently devoted himself to the drudgery of tasks altogether unbefitting his age and station.

"You have come late," cried a rude boy classmate one day to the tall, unyouthful scholar. He had borne, uncomplainingly and often, gibes of this kind from the more thoughtless of his young companions, but now the offender was brought to order with a sharp rebuke from the master, who, addressing the whole class, assured the students that they would yet see great things accomplished in the Church of God by the man who so late had come among them.

The Congregation

At length the trying term of preparation was at an end and Camillus stood, as God's anointed, at the altar of the Madonna in the little church of San Giacomo degli Incurabili. At that precious moment how trifling seemed the trials through which he had just passed! He would willingly encounter them all again, if he might thus prepare more perfectly for the glorious work before him. God's goodness in choosing so humble an instrument for it was his only marvel. But now must come the wrench that would tear him forever from San Giacomo. He grieved at the necessity of leaving the hospital, but there his sphere of usefulness must be limited, and looking abroad with eyes hungry for souls he saw on all sides opportunities that must not be lost, conquests for Christ.

Only two were left of the little band of pious men who had, once before, joined in his zealous project. He found Bernadino and Curzio as anxious to take up the work again as if there were no discouraging memories of its former dismal failure to deter them.

Bernadino was an old man, but he had the heart of a little child, pure, simple, joyous. There was ever a kindly light in his eyes, and a merry word on his lips, that made his coming to the wards something to be looked for and his going chorused with blessings. He had been, in his younger days, a poor woodseller, wholly without learning, but skilled, even then, in a science that needs no human teacher, the science which no university can count among those of its proud curriculum. He had proved his possession of it when a dignified courtier, one day, got into the way of the woodseller's barrow and measured his dignified length on

the sidewalk. Bernadino instantly stopped to ask pardon, but received, instead, a sound box upon the ear. Of course a gaping crowd gathered at once to see how the lowly countryman would avenge the insult.

"Ph! a poor-spirited fellow," they said, as they walked away, after seeing Bernadino fall upon his knees and beg the nobleman to give him another blow for the sake of Jesus Christ. That is how the world values Christlike deeds.

When Bernadino was received, as a servant, at the hospital of San Giacomo he was still a young man, with a genial, amiable disposition, and a sunny temper that speedily won all hearts, and made him welcome everywhere. His trustworthiness, too, was quickly recognized and he soon came to be the master of the stores. In that capacity he served faithfully for many years. Bernadino was growing old now, however, and when, as had been his custom from his youth, he knelt at the ringing of the bells of Ara Coeli for Matins, to pray until midnight, he would often fall asleep and remain thus upon his knees all night.

This was one of Camillus' first companions. The other was Curzio, without learning like Bernadino, but full of zeal for the cause. When Camillus explained to them that they should be Brothers and wear the ferriola, which would make them look like priests, their satisfaction was not to be concealed.

The hospital authorities, however, were not very well pleased when they discovered that Camillus was about to leave them, taking two of their best servants. Indeed, they made it so unpleasant for the three aspirants to the religious life, that they were glad to be off and about their new work as speedily as possible.

But where should they seek a home? They could not live in the hospitals they now meant to serve. They had not a penny wherewith to pay for even one night's lodging. Truly they were to be like the "Son of man, who had not whereon to lay His head."

Suddenly Camillus bethought himself of the church of the Madonnina, of which he had been given the chaplaincy.

To a small room in the rear of the church he bade his brothers follow him, and there, in the most uncomfortable of lodgings, these three brave men established themselves until God should provide something better. Not having beds, they slept upon the floor with only poor quilts to cover them, and not enough of these to go around. So the poor refuge of these three servants of God was scarcely more comfortable than that in which the three lowly wanderers of Bethlehem found shelter.

The actual foundation of the religious Congregation, for which Camillus had been preparing, was thus made. At his direction, Bernadino and Curzio joyfully laid aside their secular dress and were provided with the coveted cassock and ferriola.

Then began their labors. From one hospital to another they went, serving all alike. Camillus exercised the priestly offices that were his happy prerogative, while his two companions gave instructions where they were needed, suggesting holy thoughts to the dying, preparing them to meet their merciful Judge with courage and confidence. Tears streamed from the eyes of the poor sufferers as the new nurses went from one to the other, performing for them the most lowly offices. When everything possible had been done to make the afflicted bodies comfortable, gentle words of spiritual assistance were spoken to them.

"Praised be God, these are His angels," cried the sick ones. "Christ Himself has come to His own!"

"My Lord, my Love, what can I do for Thee?" whispered Camillus as he bent over each poor cot, seeing in the sufferer there only the Christ whom he wished to serve.

Straightway the news went forth that a new order of things was being established by a holy man of God; that the sick in the hospitals were being properly cared for and assisted to prepare for a good death. If these things could be done in the hospitals why not in the homes where there were sick ones? Petitions poured in until Camillus and his helpers were overwhelmed with the calls for their services.

With superhuman courage and self-sacrifice they tried to meet the demands until, as might have been expected, two of them, Camillus himself and Curzio, succumbed to attacks of fever contracted in the pestilential air of the sick wards.

Curzio's despondence at what he called a misfortune knew no bounds. "Do not call that a misfortune which has been sent by God, dear brother," said Camillus. "God wishes that we should understand perfectly what it is to suffer, that we may, thereby, serve the suffering with more kindness."

But in the little back room in the church of the Madonnina, even with the devoted Bernadino to care for them, they could not be properly attended to, so the first three members of Camillus' Congregation were obliged to separate for a time. San Giacomo received them and nursed them back to health; but it was not the robust health that they had enjoyed before. Emaciated and wan from the fever, they went, almost immediately, from the hospital cots back to their poor lodgings at the church.

They were quickly joined by Bernadino, full of joy at the sight of them, and as ready as they were to take up the beloved work once more. But now our reunited little band had to face a problem that looked difficult indeed. The Church of the Madonnina, it is true, afforded them shelter, but it did little more. It was located in a malarial region near the Tiber, so, wisely concluding that men always half sick would be of little use for the work proposed, they saw that this place must be abandoned. It was easy to know that this should be done, but how to do it was the difficulty. Camillus bade them place their confidence in the providence of God, which would not fail them.

In truth, their anxiety was soon relieved by the munificence of one Signor Pompeo, a wealthy citizen of Rome, who, seeing the work that they were about, interested himself in their behalf and bestowed upon them generous alms. This enabled them to procure a suitable dwelling, and Camillus began to take definite steps toward the actual foundation of his Congregation.

After earnest prayer, Camillus went, one day, to Cardinal Mondovi of the Sacred College, and made known to him the plan of his hoped-for institution. He was listened to with the utmost sympathy, and the cardinal, impressed with the earnestness and humility of his client, promised to do all in his power to aid him.

Thus it was not long afterward that Camillus found himself in the presence of the Holy Father, Sixtus V. Rumors of the work that he had been doing had already reached the ear of the Pope, who had expressed a desire to see a man capable of such self-sacrificing zeal.

When the plans for the new Congregation were detailed to him, the Pope saw at once the immense advantage that

would accrue from it; moreover, he recognized the holiness of the man who was pleading his cause with so much earnestness. Camillus' pale face, still bearing traces of his late illness, was lighted up with the fire of holy enthusiasm, and he quite lost his natural diffidence as he unfolded his project to his august listener. Nay, lured on by the unusual interest shown in his idea, he even besought the Holy Father to permit his Congregation to be distinguished by a red cross, relating the dream of his mother and urging his desire to fulfill it if God should so will. What was his joy when Sixtus assured him that the approval of the Holy See should be forthcoming for his Congregation of Ministers of the Sick, and gave his promise of a brief permitting the wearing of the red cross. What a happy outcome to the dream that had cast such dark shadows upon the last days of Camilla de Lellis!

Camillus himself, many years after, while staying at Bacchianico, his native town, was conversing with some friends and pointing to the red cross upon his habit said, "Look at this cross which my mother thought was to be the ruin and destruction of her house; how has God changed it into the resurrection of many and an exaltation of His glory!"

Indeed, very shortly after the privilege of wearing the cross was granted by the Holy Father, God was pleased to show a distinct mark of favor to the new Congregation.

Efforts were being made in Spain about this time by a company of good men to found a Congregation to serve the sick in hospitals in some such manner as Camillus was doing. One of their number, Giovanni d'Adamo, was sent to Rome to seek the approval of the Holy See. Many of the cardinals and prelates disapproved, however, pointing out that the Congregation of the Ministers of the Sick had just been approved and that any one who wished to serve God in that particular way could do no better than to join it. Adamo

was a humble man who wished to do God's will in the matter, so he prayed that it might be made known to him. One day upon taking from his bosom a little white crucifix, which he always carried with him, he was astonished to find that it was no longer white, but red. Here, surely, was an answer to his prayer to know God's will. He went at once to Camillus, told the whole story and asked for the habit. It was granted and he spent a long life of usefulness and holiness helping to serve and sanctify the sick.

Although Camillus obtained for the members of his Congregation permission to live together in the practise of poverty, chastity, and obedience and the service of the plague-stricken, he had not yet reached the height of his desires. Hidden from all eyes was the cherished hope that the Congregation might yet become an Order, for he knew that, then, incalculable good could be done.

Just now he would let it grow and thrive like the little field flower, scattering its seeds with every wind that blew, until its blossoms should flourish wherever there was soil to nourish them. With open arms the founder of the new Congregation received all who wished to join him. Old and young, rich and poor, priest and layman, were pronounced eligible. There was but one requisite - a disposition to serve God in suffering humanity with no regard for the cost to self. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friend, sings the Church in the Mass of Saint Camillus today, and with good reason.

In an incredibly short time the first few Ministers of the Sick found their numbers increasing, and in truth there was need of this, for their services were in demand on all sides. The wearers of the black robe and mantle with crosses of red upon breast and shoulder were to be found beside every hospital cot in Rome. They performed the most menial

offices for the sick; washed and dressed the most disgusting sores, made the beds, cleansed the tongues of the poor sufferers, shrank from no services however loathsome.

And oh, the dying - the comfort and courage and strength given them in their last hours by the presence of these men of God! And the good deaths procured for the weak, the impenitent, the despairing!

Camillus often spoke to his helpers of the utility of making known to the dying the fact of their approaching end soon enough to give them time to prepare for it, and to make that act of resignation to God's will which lends to the act of dying all its merit.

Labors and Trials

So occupied were the first few Ministers of the Sick with their new work, that neither they nor their founder gave a thought to providing a suitable house for their own accomodation. Some of them were priests, but had no altar upon which to say the daily Mass, and had to depend upon the charity of those who would give them the use of one.

At last through contributions, given him by charitable persons who had been observing his efforts, Camillus was enabled to obtain a lease of the church of Saint Mary Magdalen or the Maddalena, and also to hire two or three small houses in its vicinity. Here, with thanks to God, he established his young Congregation, not yet numerous, but having every prospect of rapid growth. Ecclesiastics of the highest rank were becoming interested in the development of the recently approved Congregation. Some of the cardinals who had most rigidly opposed its establishment were known to express open approval and astonishment at the works that were being done by those who had joined it.

Pope Sixtus V, whose interest in Camillus had already been awakened, was still further convinced of the holiness of the man and of the earnest charity that inspired him by an incident that happened about this time. Sixtus, who was a most ardent patron of arts and sciences, had recently brought to Rome a large number of velvet-weavers to introduce their art into the city. Shortly after their coming a most deadly disease broke out in the locality where they had settled, and among the first to become its victims were the artisans. So virulent was the contagion that in a short time almost every family of the little colony was affected. Strangers, with none to whom they might turn for

assistance, they were speedily reduced to the greatest distress.

Word was brought to Camillus of their condition, and, taking with him one of the brothers, he hastened to the aid of the afflicted people. Knocking at the door of the first cottage that had been pointed out to him, he could get no response, but could hear quite plainly the piteous moans of several voices. Without hesitation the two men entered by the window, and, to their horror, found two entire families prostrated by the loathsome disease.

After ascertaining what was needed in the way of remedies and provisions, Camillus sent the brother back to the convent and to the hospital of Saint Sixtus for these things, while he himself set about caring for the poor sufferers, among whom were two or three mere infants. The chronicles of the Ministers of the Sick, in relating the incident, say: "Anybody who had seen the good Father Camillus rolling and unrolling the babies in their swaddling clothes, would have been struck, and could not have helped praising the God of Love, when he considered how a man brought up in the school of arms, could have learned in the school of charity to have performed, with so much skill and care, the office of a nurse and mother."

During all that frightful time of fever and infection, Camillus and his helpers went to and fro, from house to house, unafraid, anxious only that none should be neglected. By dint of begging from a wealthy patron, Camillus managed to procure a donkey with which he brought loads of provisions from door to door. Four of the brothers accompanied him as he trudged about covered with sweat and dust, never complaining of what he was suffering from that troublesome old wound in his leg, which was irritated by the unusual exertion.

On one occasion Camillus found, near the Porta del Popolo, several poor men all more or less affected by the sickness, and half dead with cold and hunger. He at once undertook to lead them to one of the hospitals. One of the men, overcome by exhaustion, fell by the roadside and could not be restored sufficiently to arise. Just then a carriage filled with gentlemen happened to be passing. Camillus, who never hesitated to beg for the poor, hailed the driver, and bade him stop. Then he went to the carriage and asked the occupants for the love of God to take in the poor helpless man. Moved by the evident distress of the sufferers and their deliverer and actuated by real Christian charity, the gentlemen immediately vacated the carriage and placed it at the disposal of the saint. With joyous alacrity and the most ardent expressions of gratitude to his benefactors, Camillus helped his poor men into the carriage and drove them in triumph to the hospital.

At another time he met a company of poor wretches who had refused to enter the hospital appointed for them by the government, and who, in consequence, had been sentenced to banishment from Rome. They were being conducted under guard to a boat. Moved by their wretched condition, Camillus followed them with tears streaming down his cheeks, begging the guards to give the men into his care, promising that they should trouble no one again. Upon the guard's refusal to listen to him, Camillus begged them to give him time to go to the governor and plead for them. This also was refused. Then Camillus, in the greatest distress, fell on his knees before the officers, and stretching out his arms in the form of a cross, begged them, for Christ's sake, to let him have all the poor wretches, or at least to give him the greatest sufferers among them. At this the guards relented and permitted him to choose two of them. Filled with joy, Camillus at once chose the two most emaciated and repulsive among them, deploring, all the while, the fate to

which he must leave the others. As the boat containing these pushed off from the shore, Camillus stood there with streaming eyes, blessing them and recommending them to God. Then he took the two men whom he had rescued to one of his infirmaries, where such devoted care was given them that they finally recovered their health.

This pious deed, however, procured for Camillus a rebuke from the governor, to whose ears the story was brought, and who cautioned the zealous founder of the Ministers of the Sick not to let his charity run away with him again, forgetting that the orders of superiors should be obeyed. Most humbly Camillus begged his pardon and hurried away, thanking God for the humiliation that his kind deed had brought upon him.

A year of calamities such as those just described, when famine stalked abroad with all its horrid attendants, sickness, disease, poverty, and death, such a year could not fail to show the worth of the devoted followers of Camillus de Lellis. Generously they gave themselves to the work, counting it nothing to sacrifice life itself in such a cause. Indeed, five members of the young Congregation joyfully yielded their souls to God when it became evident that the fever was upon them, and thanked Him that they were accounted worthy to be victims. The hospitals were fairly teeming with stricken humanity, and though the Ministers of the Sick were indefatigable in their efforts to relieve, and to obtain relief for them, they could not begin to improve conditions.

At length complaints were pouring in, that all Rome was in danger of being infected, and Camillus was obliged to go to the Pope and make known the state of affairs. It was determined that the poor people afflicted with the disease should be removed to an immense granary in a remote part

of the city. There they could be cared for with danger to none but their devoted attendants, whose lives were of small account save in the sight of that God for whom they were offered.

One of the most difficult features of the task that Camillus had undertaken was to procure food for the multitude in the granary. Patiently, day by day, he plodded from one street to another on his quest, until he was weary and footsore, and then would often sit up the entire night making mattresses and filling them with straw - to add to the luxuries of the poor patients in the granary hospital. God's providence never failed His servant through all that wearing time and the faith of that servant was equal to every difficulty.

Late one afternoon he was returning from an unsuccessful journey in search of help when he met a messenger from the hospital, sent to tell him that there was sore need of food there.

Where should he turn? Suddenly he remembered that in the cellar of the convent there was a sack of flour put by for a moment of extreme distress.

Hastening to the convent, he bade the porter who accompanied him to shoulder the sack and carry it off to the hospital. This was too much for the procurator of the house, Father Francisco Profets, who complained that Camillus cared nothing how much his own religious suffered from want so long as the hospital was provided for. This drew from Camillus a most severe rebuke.

"Where is your faith, man? Where is your charity?" he cried "Have you no confidence that the God who feeds the birds of the air will provide for your needs?"

Then Camillus walked indignantly away, leaving his worthy procurator covered with confusion; for indeed the poor man had but the welfare of his hard-working brethren at heart. God*s providence was speedily made manifest on this occasion, however, for that very night some one left on the steps of the convent a large basket full of the best white bread; and after that, every morning while the famine lasted, this kind donation was found on the convent steps. It proved to be the gift of a friendly baker of the neighborhood, who, perhaps, had heard about the sack of flour.

The Order

During all this time of labor and trial it never once occurred to Camillus to feel troubled that the work of founding his Order did not seem to be going forward. With perfect tranquillity of mind he worked on, knowing that in God's own time a way would be opened for him. The humble work that comes to our hand without our choosing is safer for us than all our self-planned achievements, no matter how plainly these may appear to be for God's glory.

Shortly after the breaking out of the pestilence and famine just described, to his intense grief, Camillus heard of the death of one whom he had regarded as his most helpful friend and patron, and to whom he looked for future support and guidance, Pope Sixtus V. It was now three years since this Holy Father had confirmed the Congregation of the Ministers of the Sick, and, convinced of its usefulness in the Church, he was just about to sign the brief erecting it into an Order when he died. Here, indeed, was a trial for the patience of Camillus. There might now be a long period of delay and fresh disappointments in store for him. Urban VII, who was the successor of Sixtus, was almost unknown to him. The act of resignation was scarcely framed in his heart - barely ten days had elapsed when the papal throne was declared vacant again; Urban VII was no more.

With a great revulsion of feeling Camillus learned that the successor of Urban VII was Cardinal Sfondrati, whom he knew a little, and, what was more to the purpose, whom he knew to be a close friend of Cardinal Mondovi. The latter, he felt sure, would use his influence with the new pontiff, Gregory XIV, to bring this affair to a happy issue. That his confidence was not misplaced was proved by the

promptness with which his request was acceded to. It would be impossible to imagine anything like the joy that Camillus felt when he found himself actually in possession of the Bull declaring his Congregation an Order. Faculties were granted its members to take the four solemn vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and the perpetual service of the sick - as the formula specified, "even those attacked by pestilence." But the Bull enjoined the election of a father general, so a new fear at once beset Camillus.

In all simplicity and sincerity, he called together all his religious and addressed them, reminding them that he was a man of little or no learning, besides being worn out with his labors and afflicted with an incurable complaint in his leg. He therefore begged them not to consider him as fit for the office of general. The very deed by which he sought to accomplish his self-abasement was that by which he established his claim to an honor that could be borne worthily only by one of his humility. His plea, therefore, was set aside as not to be considered. He was at once nominated and unanimously elected general for life.

The following day, which was the feast of the Immaculate Conception, Camillus, with twenty-five of his companions, kneeling in the sanctuary of the church of the Maddalena, after receiving Holy Communion from the archbishop of Ragusa, made the solemn profession of their vows, the vows that were to commit them to lives where self could play no part, where deeds that angels might envy were to be their daily portion; lives that needed but courage and perseverance to bring them safely to the feet of an approving Master.

On the evening of the same day he assembled the twenty-five newly professed religious, and after tenderly embracing them all, he knelt before them, protesting that he desired to

renounce whatever he had or could have in this world. Then he begged, as an alms, from those assembled there, the clothes that he wore, and the necessary furniture that was in his room. Touched and inspired by his example, the others immediately knelt and made the same act of renouncement, after which, hastening to their rooms, they gathered all that was not of absolute necessity and brought it to Camillus to dispose of as he wished.

One more act remained to be performed that this might be an ever-memorable occasion. This was a pilgrimage of thanksgiving which Camillus, with his little band, made to the Seven Churches of Rome. On the way he discoursed earnestly, first with one group of his companions and then another, and once he bade them be seated by the wayside and addressed them on the hope they ought to have in divine protection. The providence of God was always his favorite topic, and now, stretching out his hands, he exclaimed with much feeling, "Fear not, little flock." Then, with earnestly persuasive words, he urged them to persevere in their holy undertaking, to seek the way of perfection, and to trust in God who would doubtless multiply their numbers and enable them to spread to all parts of the earth, even to infidel lands, where it might be given them to die, victims of charity, sacrificed for those for whom Christ Himself had died. When Camillus finished speaking he saw, with holy joy, that his hearers were moved to tears, and many of them expressed the hope that they might be among those who would win the palm of martyrdom.

When those days of devotion and thanksgiving were completed, Father Camillus and his companions resumed the work for which they felt strengthened in body and invigorated in spirit. In the first approbation of their constitution, written by Pope Sixtus V, they had read these inspiriting words: "Now our beloved son, Camillus de Lellis,

priest of the diocese of Chieta, and others, his companions, considering how pleasing to God and necessary for the salvation of souls this kind of duty is, have in these days shown themselves as affectionate to Christ's poor in the hospitals as a mother could be to her only son; and are daily giving proofs of the same, by exhorting some, with all becoming kindness and charity, to be patient; by admonishing others to receive the sacraments of the Church; and by consoling others in their last moments, and exhorting them day and night to die well."

These and other commendatory words could not fail to have a stimulating influence upon those for whom they were written. They were ready now to resume their work with renewed vigor. Besides, the vows which they had made bound them now to that which before had been voluntary, and they realized how priceless these vows had rendered their works of charity.

It was at about this time that Father Camillus was honored one day by a visit from his former confessor, the great and holy Saint Philip Neri. It will be remembered that Saint Philip was never in those earlier times more than half-hearted in his approval of his eccentric penitent. To be sure, he had, in the light of later developments, generously confessed himself mistaken, and . had given Camillus proofs of his satisfaction thereat. Now he came to repeat his words of encouragement.

"Really, Father Camillus," he said, "the success of this work seems to me miraculous and not brought about by human means or wisdom."

Camillus listened to his words and humbly expressed his gratitude that God had been pleased to bless the work which had been undertaken in obedience to His direct

inspiration. It seems almost incredible that until now Camillus had, without an income, been able to provide for the support of his community. The members who composed it were, for the greater part, men of small means or none; all that they could look to for the daily maintenance was what charity doled out to them. Occasionally a kind benefactor would bestow upon them a liberal alms, or a bequest would raise them above want for a while; but whether the store-rooms were full or empty, neither superior nor subjects were in the least troubled; God would provide - and He never failed them. Now, however, it looked serious enough. The rent of the three houses in which they lived near the church of the Maddalena was an ever-increasing debt, and the patience of the owners seemed to have come to an end. Two agents were sent to Father Camillus to make him aware of this fact. No one would ever suppose that he stood before these men without bank account or without pocket money, for with a perfectly serious face he asked how the debt stood, and, upon being told that it was nine thousand scudi, replied, "Very well; I will purchase the houses." His bank account was in the hands of Divine Providence, and he had no fear that it would fail him when he wished to draw.

One of the agents, who knew the extreme poverty of the Order, laughed loudly at this. Father Camillus turned to him and said, "Now, is not God able to send, perhaps tomorrow, sacks of money to my door?"

After the agents had gone Camillus called the religious together in the church, and before the Blessed Sacrament addressed them upon the providence of God in such sublime words that all felt them to be inspired.

"Fathers and Brethren," he said in conclusion, "let us not for a moment doubt the providence of God; only let us attend to perfection of life and the service of the poor, and if we do

this, I promise you that before long, perhaps before a month has passed, we shall experience the assistance of God and shall see our Order delivered from all debts. Remember the words that this most merciful Master (pointing to the Blessed Sacrament) said to the holy virgin, Catherine of Siena, 'Catherine, think thou of Me and I will think of thee.' And so we ought to believe that, if we think of Him and His poor. He will think of us and will not leave us destitute."

It is not thus with our one-sided prayers. We ask and ask and never give, but only ask again. An occasional alms to the poor might dispose God favorably toward our requests.

On this occasion at least a generous response met the appeal, but in a most unlooked-for way. Cardinal Mondovi, the good friend and patron of all Camillus' undertakings, died, leaving to the Order of the Ministers of the Sick all his property. This was no inconsiderable amount, for he had belonged to a noble and wealthy family. In the beginning of the cardinal's illness Camillus, who had for him all the affection of a devoted son, went frequently to visit him, and finally, at his urgent request, stayed constantly at his side. As Camillus perceived that the end was approaching he sobbed with genuine grief, while he implored God to give his friend and father a holy and happy death. The dying man held fast to Camillus' hand and seemed to wish to say something to him, but was unable to frame the words. When all was over, and Camillus saw his kind protector lying dead before him, to the astonishment of all who stood by he gave way to the most unrestrained grief. He kissed the cold hands and bathed them with his tears. He gazed long and affectionately into the dear, dead face as if he would imprint its features upon his memory forever. Those who were present, and who were wont to regard Camillus as a man utterly devoid of human affection, were filled with astonishment at this sight, and withdrew silently, feeling

that they had witnessed the sorrow of a saint, for even while he wept, not for one instant did his lips cease to move in prayer.

When the notary opened and read the will it was found that the Ministers of the Sick were the sole heirs to property of the value of fifteen thousand scudi, enough to free them wholly from debt and to enable them to improve the condition of their poor convent. The good cardinal's will declared that his funeral should be conducted without pomp of any sort, but Camillus, acting as his heir, would not have it so. He sent to the Holy Father and obtained permission to have his friend interred as befitted his rank and worth. The cardinal was, therefore, carried with great solemnity to the church of San Clemente, of which he was titular, to be buried. Closely following the bier walked the sons of Father Camillus with their founder, whose great height and ascetic appearance attracted the notice of all who witnessed the cortege. He shrank from this display, but bravely put aside his own feelings in his desire to honor one whom he felt worthy of all honor.

Foundations

Up to this time Camillus had founded but two houses, the one in Rome and the other in Naples; subjects had been too few to admit of sending missions to other places. But now applicants became so numerous that Camillus took it as a sign that God wished the Order to spread. Milan and Genoa were calling for help and there seemed no reason for denying it. Small companies of the religious were therefore sent to each; and after their founder, who had accompanied them, had established them in hired houses, he left them to exercise their zeal. The work that they did, and their manner of living, quickly excited the admiration of the people, who vied with each other in providing convents for them and in contributing to their support.

In the meantime, Camillus went to Naples on business connected with the house there. During the voyage he had the sorrow of witnessing some grave misconduct among the sailors. Unable to endure the insult offered to God, he sprang to his feet, and raising his crucifix aloft, poured forth such a torrent of rebuke that they cowered before him.

"I am astonished," he cried, "that the Lord has patience with you. But know that, if you do not repent of these abominable sins, the vengeance of God will come upon this whole galley."

This actually happened, for, as he was making a voyage some years later, a sailor approached him, and after respectfully saluting him, said, "Father, your words came true."

"What do you mean, my man?" asked Camillus; "what words?"

"Why, Father, don't you remember what happened a few years ago, when you were crossing to Naples in company with some graceless, indecent fellows? You threatened them with fearful judgments of God for their sinful conduct."

"Well," said Camillus, "may God grant they paid heed to my words."

"Father, they were wrecked in the Gulf of Lyons the next year, in the midst of their sinful conduct. Not one of them was saved."

After the foundations at Milan and Genoa, Camillus was entrusted by the Holy Father with a commission more far-reaching in its design, and different from any that had yet been undertaken. It was to send some of the religious to care for the sick and dying soldiers among the troops that were going into Hungary. Eight of the religious were chosen and Camillus himself accompanied them part of the way, that he might instruct and prepare them for their duties. None could know better than he the difficulties and hardships that life among the soldiers would entail. The dangers and temptations to which they must be exposed would be endless. He therefore reminded them to live in peace with one another and to give good example, promising them to write further instructions.

Thus prepared, the fathers and brothers continued upon the expedition full of courage and zeal. Wind, cold, rain, shot and shell, demands in the hospital and in the field only increased their zealous attentions. The red cross was to be seen everywhere, and everywhere was welcomed by the wounded and dying soldiers. Not infrequently it was declared to have been the instrument of God's goodness in protecting lives. Among the instances on record is the following: Three soldiers were sitting quite close together in

a tent when a ball of forty pounds weight, fired from a cannon, entered the tent and passed between them, without as much as touching them. A chest of clothes which was struck by the ball was set on fire and burned with everything in it, except the red cross, which was on a cloak belonging to one of the fathers. When word of what had happened went abroad, the tent was surrounded by soldiers all clamoring for a piece of the cross, which was distributed to them thread by thread.

At last the siege came to an end, and though the nurses were worn out with fatigue, they remained with the wounded until the last one was able to be moved. One of the brothers was completely prostrated and was placed in a wagon to follow the others. Brother Annibale's journey ended in the land promised to those who, after the example of the Master, give their lives to serve the needy. His was the first red cross sown in the soil of the plain near the Danube. The wagoner buried him gently and marked the place with a small wooden cross.

Upon the return of those who survived, Camillus received them with the greatest joy, listening eagerly to the account of what they had been able to do, and thanking God a thousand times for having permitted them to be His instruments. Then they told them of the one who had not come back. For this, too, he thanked God, with tears streaming down his cheeks, "For," said he, "was he not ready, this good, humble, charitable brother, who has sent before him works of priceless worth? Throngs of souls have borne him to paradise. And now, my brothers,'* he added, "God is about to try us once more; another pestilence has just broken out and the Holy Father, in his charity, has made most wise provisions for the care of the sufferers in the various parishes. To us he gives the sick in the Borgo Sant'

Angelo and its suburbs. It is God's work; let us go, then, in His name."

With the most perfect readiness they followed this courageous leader, although they had already passed through the horrors of one pestilence and knew what to expect. For two entire months, night and day, they went about, caring for the worst cases, paying no heed to the frightful heat of summer, their own loss of rest, the fearful scenes, the stench; all these were offered for the salvation of the souls for whom they were laboring. Camillus was ever with them, encouraging, assisting, and giving them always the most perfect example. "The true apostolic life," he would say, "consists in giving one's self no repose or rest."

But it would happen sometimes that poor, worn-out nature would resist and have things her own way. One of the fathers, who had been up several nights, went, at last, to have a good night's rest. His head had scarcely touched the pillow when he fell into a deep sleep. Before he had been asleep an hour he was aroused and told that there was a desperate case to which he must go at once, as there was no one else available. He arose and tried to draw on his shoes, but while he was doing so fell asleep again. He continued, however, to dress himself and, still asleep, left the house and walked quite a distance. At last, his unsteady and reeling gait attracted the attention of some officers of the law, who were scandalized at first upon finding that it was one of the Father Ministers of the Sick. Seeing the state of the case, however, they awoke him. The good father was not a little surprised and disturbed at finding himself in such company. He was set upon his way, now thoroughly awake.

Although it seemed that God was pleased to exercise a most special care over Camillus and his sons at such times as these, they were not always to be deprived of the crown of

martyrdom. During a pestilence that prevailed in the city of Nola, the inhabitants were dying by thousands, chiefly for want of care. Those whose duty it was to attend them had abandoned them, and even the priests were neglecting them, through fear of the awful disease, and permitting them to die without the sacraments. At last the viceroy of Naples sent to Camillus, begging him to send his religious to their relief. At the moment he was in Genoa, but he immediately communicated with the fathers, and found seven of them willing and anxious to go at once. They reported that the sights and scenes were quite indescribable. "It was like the portrait of ancient Jerusalem traced by the mournful hand of Jeremias, Every door and window was shut, the streets were deserted, the churches empty, the bells silent, or they only tolled mournfully and sullenly for the dead."

The spiritual and corporal works of mercy beckoned to the Father Ministers from all sides. They hastened to confess and communicate those in the last extremity, and when none could be found to bury the dead, they themselves placed those poor forsaken creatures in the grave and then said Mass for them.

When Camillus returned to Genoa he was worn out with the arduous business that had taken him there, and suffering still from the effects of the sea voyage; but he prepared at once to go to the assistance of the toilers in the desolate city of Nola. He was not a moment too soon, for, as he feared, he found that five of his religious had contracted the disease. Nothing could surpass their resignation, nay, their holy joy, when they were told of the hopelessness of recovery. Was it not for this very end they had consecrated their lives to God? Praised forever be His holy name!

Cardinal Baronius, who was a kind friend of Camillus, and who had followed most attentively the work of the Ministers of the Sick since the institution of the Order, had brought to the knowledge of the Holy Father, then Clement VIII, the knowledge of the approaching death of the five religious at the post of duty. They were inexpressibly consoled then by receiving the benediction of the Holy Father and a plenary indulgence of the jubilee of the Holy Year then being celebrated in Rome.

Like a tender father, Camillus watched over them, ministering to them with his own hands and rejoicing in his heart for the brave and holy spirit that God had given them. At the end it was his hand that gave the last absolution and closed their eyes forever to all but those scenes which await God's faithful servants.

Resignation of the Generalship

It would seem as if Camillus had always been less concerned about the upbuilding of his Order, its growth and spread, and even about the management of its community life, than about the present need and the immediate work of its members in the hospitals. But Divine Providence took care that its end should not be defeated because of the scrupulous discharge of the duties that were close at hand. "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." Camillus knew that all these things would be added in God's good time. He knew, too, that he must always look for much sickness and many deaths among his religious, from the very nature of their work, and that consequently his communities would grow slowly. Indeed, the steady increase of applicants was marvelous, considering these things, and there are on record very few instances of defections from the ranks.

For the greater part, those who joined the Ministers of the Sick at that time were humble, pious, God-fearing men, of no great learning as the world understands it, yet skilled in a lore of which the world knows little. Steadily, then, if slowly, the membership had been increasing, and Camillus had been able to send foundations to Florence, Ferrara, Messina, and Palermo. While in the latter city he was painfully reminded of that Camillus de Lellis who, in this same Palermo, had once recklessly gambled away the very clothes from his back, and afterward had staked all he had left - sword, gun, and powder-flasks, thus rendering himself neither ornamental nor useful. How impossible it would have seemed then that this same reckless youth would, by God's grace, be transformed into a grave religious founder and

would visit the city of Palermo to establish a branch of his Order.

A singular story is related of the church of Saint Ninfa, which was to be the church of the Order, and of which the corner-stone was laid at the time of his visit to Palermo. In building the church of Saint Ninfa some error was made in the measurements which resulted in its becoming necessary, some years later, to alter the structure. The vaults containing the remains of the religious buried there had to be taken out. The bodies and the clothes that covered them were wholly decomposed; all was dust except the red crosses that had been sewed on their habits. These were intact - ten of them, the last of the ten religious to have been buried there having been five years in the vault. Multitudes of people witnessed this marvel and venerated the red cross through which God seemed to work out such wonderful designs.

One wish which Camillus had very much at heart was that his religious should, when it was possible, live in the hospitals of which they had charge. He believed that their opportunities of helping the sick were thus vastly increased; and for the same reason he strove to procure for them night service. He knew that patients were more apt to suffer from the neglect of secular nurses during the long vigils of the night than by day; and he knew, too, that many a soul passed into the presence of God without the assistance of a priest because of the delay or neglect of attendants. In many instances, through the opposition of these very secular nurses, who disliked the surveillance of religious, his holy purposes were thwarted, and he could obtain permission only to visit the hospitals, not to dwell in them. This was a great sacrifice to Camillus.

Rome, Palermo, Messina, all declared themselves satisfied with being merely visited, and his heart was saddened for many a day. When his religious were forced to leave Santa Maria Nuova of Florence, the Annunziata at Naples, and the Hospital of Incurables at Genoa, he was still more deeply afflicted. It was the "huge courage that can bear being sanctified" that Camillus possessed, however, and the crosses that seemed to bestrew his way only served to strengthen his resolve that not a soul should be lost that he could help to save, at least by daily visits to the hospitals.

It was the constant traveling from one city to another, to visit hospitals under the care of his religious, that caused his health finally to give way. The anxiety that the work of the foundations entailed, added to his uneasiness regarding certain debts of the Order which he saw no way of meeting, at last made him consider seriously a step which had long been in his mind. He was growing old, sixty-four years, he reflected; another could do the work better than he. Why should he hinder what he longed with all his soul to help. Relieved of the burden of office, he should be restored to peace of mind and should regain the spiritual strength sapped away by the distractions of his busy life. He would still be able to work for his dear friends, the poor and the sick. Perhaps God would be pleased to bless the Order still more abundantly because of his resignation. There was but one sorrow in it all; he must leave to his successor a burden of debts, the very thought of which filled him with dread. These debts had been contracted chiefly to pay the army of employees necessary for the service of so many hospitals.

Camillus was a liberal paymaster, and would never suffer any shortage in the supplies needful for the carrying on of the work. Naturally of a generous disposition, he was, moreover, never afraid to spend according to the dictates of charity. But while he was a royal spender for the poor, he

never wasted money himself, nor permitted its waste in his houses.

The more Camillus reflected upon the matter, the more convinced he became that it was God's will. He would not, however, make the decision without consulting those who were authorized to decide such an important matter; first, his confessor, then other religious men in whose judgment he had a great deal of confidence, and, finally, the Holy Father.

The Pope, then Paul V, referred him to the protector of his Order, Cardinal Gennasi, who finally decided that, considering Camillus' age and infirmities, and because of his ardent desire to be released from office, his resignation should be accepted. The provincials, therefore, met in Rome on October 2, 1607, and Camillus, kneeling before the cardinal protector, renounced the office of general, declaring at the same time that he desired to forego all privileges and prerogatives which might be considered his, as founder of the Order.

The cardinal raised the old man gently from his knees, commending his humility, and taking care to point out to those present that it was entirely by the founder's own wish that his resignation took place.

That night in the refectory there was not a dry eye save that of Camillus himself when he took his place at the common table, reserved for subjects. To him, no doubt, that plain, homely refectory with its frugal fare, set forth to silent partakers, was the sweetest banquet he had ever shared.

Just a few days were necessary to settle up his affairs and then he was free, free to fly to his sick poor and devote himself to them as never before. Best of all, it must now be

done in obedience, and would, therefore, be more pleasing to God. Once free from the necessity of giving directions, he intended never again to concern himself in the smallest way with the management of the Order. He was, nevertheless, often called upon by his superiors to give the benefit of his experience in deciding important matters; but he always did it with much diffidence and preferred to have no voice in the government.

The hospital of the Annunziata, at Naples, was the first to have the honor of providing a temporary home for Camillus. There he impressed his brothers with the fact that he had come to serve. He begged to be called at any hour of the day or night, either for house cases or for those from outside. When the superior tried to spare him he complained very mournfully of the deprivations they were forcing him to suffer. One of the brothers wrote of him at that time, "Our Father Camillus, by the grace of God, is well, and thinks so little of himself that we are all lost in admiration. The labors he endures seem quite wonderful. He is on guard every night and never sleeps more than four hours. He communicates the sick, gives the holy oils, helps bury the dead, and every day preaches to the poor people, with the crucifix in his hand."

Leisure to give his loving, personal service to the sick had long been the dream of Camillus' life, the chance to bend over them as in his younger days and whisper, "My Lord, my Love, what can I do for Thee?" For many years now the constant traveling required by the temporal needs of the Order had deprived him of this sweet consolation, but here, at last, it was come, the longed-for moment.

The happiness that he found in this way of living can scarcely be imagined. When he was not actually engaged about the beds of the sick, he was busy at numberless little

contrivances for their comfort; or visiting the linen-closet and then the prior, to notify him of the needs there; or he was calling on the cook in the kitchen with a gentle notification that the meat was tough or the broth badly made. It may easily be imagined that he was not always welcome when he went upon these charitable errands. The shirkers, and those who could not or would not understand the spirit that moved him, put him down as a "troublesome, dissatisfied fellow." When he heard this he was overjoyed at having something to suffer for his beloved sick ones, and he abated not one jot or one tittle of his assiduous care for them.

But alas, this consoling life in the hospital of the Annunziata was of short duration. An order from the father general bade him proceed at once to Genoa to attend to certain matters there. With grave misgivings as to the meaning of this direction, but without the slightest delay, he left Naples and went to Genoa. When he arrived there he found that his fears were not unfounded. The duty expected of him was to exercise some needed reforms in a house that had gone slightly astray. He set about the work before him, and had soon restored the refractory members, to whom he had been called, to fervor and exact discipline. When the need for that duty had passed, he wrote to the general begging to be removed from the position of command in which he had been unwittingly placed. "I should have expected anything," he said, "sooner than that your Reverence would have commanded me to make this visit; but for two reasons I willingly do it; one is holy obedience, which for many years I have promised and which I never before was put in circumstances to perform. The other is the hope that it is to the service of Our Lord and the good of our Order. For the rest, your Reverence knows well that I have had enough commanding for two and twenty years or more." Having thus

manifested to his superior his feelings in the matter, he waited patiently for dismissal from this distasteful office.

At last he was free and at liberty to visit Rome, dear to him because of its numerous hospitals, and the memories of the early days of his conversion. There was one hospital of which he was especially fond, that of San Spirito, the first of which he and his early companions had served as religious. He asked, and to his great joy obtained, permission to pass the nights in the hospital of San Spirito, during his stay in Rome. The prior gave him a room in which to sleep, but he spent very little time there. Four or five hours' sleep was the most he allowed himself. Then he arose, made a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and stole softly to the wards. Sometimes, in these quiet night visits, he would stumble across a poor fellow afraid to die, yet dying; afraid to meet his Creator, yet very near to that meeting. Then Camillus would kneel beside him, and talk to him so gently and so sweetly of the mercy of God, urging him to kiss the crucifix and to invoke the names of Jesus and Mary, that gradually his dispositions would change and Camillus would have the happiness of hearing his confession, and hurrying off to the chapel to fetch the Blessed Sacrament.

Then this holy pilgrim of the night would go upon his way through the wards inexpressibly consoled by his first visit. There were often over four hundred patients in San Spirito, and to visit even as many as he could reach in one night was a task so fatiguing that the feeble old man often tottered as he walked and had to grasp the beds to keep from falling. Indeed, one night he did fall between two beds, bruising his face so badly that even the sick, who are usually too concerned with their own troubles to notice those of their attendants, were moved to pity. But he hushed their words of S3niipathy and went on his way from ward to ward and from bed to bed, here smoothing a pillow, there arranging

the bed clothes more comfortably, and always taking care to whisper in each poor sufferer's ear a word of spiritual comfort, a thought to occupy the wakeful, restless mind.

When daylight came he was relieved, that he might say Office and the Holy Mass, which was usually offered for the needs of the Church, for his Order, and especially for the sick and dying. These duties completed, he would return to the wards and help there until midday. And after being thus on his feet from midnight until noon, he complained that the clock of the Castel Sant' Angelo struck too soon. What had he done for the good of the poor sick ones? Nevertheless he went obediently to the house of the Maddalena, where he occupied himself with religious duties until it was time to return to the hospital.

The Last Visitation

To live in Rome and visit San Spirito every day! Could anything in life be more desirable? A visitor one day asked Camillus if he did not find the noises and odors of the hospital trying. "Trying!" he exclaimed. "There is no music sweeter to me than the voices of the sick, all clamoring at once to be assisted; no perfume more delicious than the odor of drugs and ointments that bring such relief to the sick; and if it were a thousand times more offensive I would gladly endure it if thereby I could gain anything for the souls of the sufferers."

But his work in San Spirito was over. He was needed elsewhere, and when word came to him from the father general that he was to leave Rome at once, he put aside all regrets and prepared to obey. He found that he was to go first to Naples on a visitation of the houses there, and afterwards to the Abruzzi. In the latter province was his native Bacchianico and as he had still in his heart a degree of warmth for this place and its people, he was glad to go and see how it fared with them, and whether their spiritual state was all that he could wish.

Alas! he found that part of the country entirely under the scourge of a desolating famine. All the worst features of such a visitation were in evidence, even to the feeding of people on grass by the wayside. From the mayor to the last civilian there seemed to be no one able to meet this grievous condition of things. Taking affairs into his own hands, Camillus was soon able to feed the hungry; not, however, without marvelous help from on high. He sowed two measures of beans and reaped enough to feed hundreds of mouths. A skin of wine given to him by a charitable woman,

who was to send it as it was needed, yielded barrel after barrel and seemed to have no end. These miracles of aid and countless others God granted to the prayers of His servant and, to the joy of the people, a gradual improvement in affairs set in.

But as for Camillus himself, God permitted no miracle to alleviate his sufferings, even while he was procuring help for others. A journey which he was obliged to take to secure two hundred scudi that had been promised him nearly put an end to his usefulness. As the roads could not be traveled with horses, he was obliged to go on foot. The rough walking played havoc with his wounded leg and brought on a fever which prostrated him. As soon as he was even slightly restored he attempted to look after the distribution of the money, but, finding that it was not enough, he was obliged to appeal to the municipal council. Though far from able, he attended the meeting of the council and addressed the members with so much eloquence and earnestness that the cause was won; but it cost him another severe attack of fever.

To a member of Camillus* own family God was pleased to grant a great favor during his stay in Bacchianico. He had told a young woman, the wife of a cousin, to use a certain vessel of oil for the lamp of the Blessed Sacrament. She drew many flasks, but though the vessel was a small one, it continued to yield oil, until it was declared miraculous.

At last his labors in Bacchianico came to an end; the time of harvest, which had promised to be a time of starvation and bitter woe, was changed, by the tread of saintly feet over the soil, into a season of fruitfulness and plenty. Sickness and hunger had fled from the presence of the servant of God.

And now Camillus was to leave his native place forever; his labors there were over. Full of gratitude, his kinspeople and others gathered around as he and his companions were about to mount for their return to Naples. Catching sight of a youth who evidently needed a last word, Camillus shook a warning finger at him. "Take care, Bernadino; remember what I have so often told you and try to live like a Christian in the grace of God; otherwise hell is prepared for you."

The recalcitrant Bernadino had no such forebodings, however, but he thought it well to divert attention from himself. "You will return to Bacchianico, will you not, father, that when you die your bones may rest among us?" "No," replied Camillus, "I hope to die in Rome and rest in that holy city." Then with uncovered head thrown back, and gaze fixed upon the distant hills, he exclaimed, "O my native land, remember what I have taught thee, for we shall never see each other more." Tears were in all eyes as he rode away, even in those of the merry Bernadino.

At Naples Camillus assisted at the election of a father general. Father Francesco Antonio Niglio, and, greatly to his satisfaction, the new superior desired him to be his companion upon a visitation which he was about to make to all the houses of the Order. Camillus knew that it would be the last time he should look upon those works of which God in His goodness had made him the instrument. Forty years had elapsed since the passing of those trying days when he and his first brave companions, Curzio and Bernadino, had taken shelter in the malarial and uncomfortable lodgings in the rear of the church of the Madonnina. Now sixteen houses scattered throughout Italy harbored hundreds of devoted religious, carrying out with ardent charity and zeal the very works of which Camillus had dreamed in those first days. And not only had there been a great increase of the Order on earth, but a foundation had been made in heaven, for over

two hundred of the members had died, victims of those diseases to which they ministered.

It would be a great joy to Camillus, then, to look once more upon the works so dear to him, especially as he felt it would be for the last time. This journey, in truth, brought him much consolation. At the sanctuary of Loreto he said Mass with the utmost fervor, beseeching our Blessed Mother to be with him at the end. He felt the greatest confidence that Our Lady would listen favorably to his prayer, for never, since his conversion, had he failed in the duties of a devoted son.

At all the houses that he visited he spoke with conviction of this as being the last time he should look upon his spiritual children in this world. Gathering about him, they kissed his hand with every mark of affectionate gratitude and sorrow, feeling that his words were a sad prophecy.

There was one city dearer to him than all the rest, because of the charity of the inhabitants, who were never weary of bringing assistance to the religious and the hospitals. This time he had occasion to put to the test the charity of the people of Genoa in his own behalf. While there he fell violently ill, and it seemed as if his last moments had surely come. Immediately, certain gentlemen of the city offered themselves to be his servants, and vied with each other in rendering him every attention. It would have pleased Camillus better to have had the services of the humblest of the hospital nurses, but in consideration for the feelings of these zealous gentlemen, he submitted. Duke Carlo Doria, who deeply loved and venerated the servant of God and was hopeful for his recovery, offered to place a galley of his own at his disposal for the home journey. Others of the gentlemen protested, saying that the people would not be satisfied to have his remains removed from their midst.

When Camillus caught wind of the controversy regarding his burial, he calmly announced that Rome was the city where his remains must rest. And to Rome he went. Part of the journey was made in the galley of his kind friend, Duke Doria, and the remainder, less happily, by horse and litter.

When he arrived at the convent he was surrounded by the religious, who grieved to see him so worn and emaciated, and who readily conjectured that he had returned to them but to die. Camillus himself was the only cheerful one among them, and he kept repeating, "Yes, yes, I have come here for a long rest." They hastened to put him to bed, but he desired first to see the prefect on important business. The prefect, who was somewhat corpulent, came laboring up the stairs as fast as he could, wondering what the important business could be.

"I did not wish to lose a moment," said Camillus, "in telling you that I have in my trunk some money that was given me in Genoa for my expenses."

"And you brought me up to tell me that?" said the still puffing prefect, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Ah, father," said Camillus, "I am too tired to attend to it tonight, and must have your permission to keep it until the morning."

"I suppose," said the good-natured prefect, bustling about the bed to make it more comfortable, "I suppose it would have burned a hole in your trunk if you left it there without permission till morning!"

Camillus smiled wanly. "No, father, but I should not have slept a wink tonight."

The days that followed were trying ones. The things that he would do were forbidden him, as to say Office; and those he would not do were commanded, as to eat meat. Of all the orders these two were the most distasteful to him; but he was as obedient as a child, only begging the prefect wistfully, one day, to ask the doctor if the time for omitting the Office were not up.

"But the doctor said a fortnight, that's very plain; and it's not up until tonight."

"Who knows," said Camillus, "whether he intended the fortnight to begin in the morning or evening?" The vanquished prefect brought in an Office-book.

A cup of beef tea which fell to the patient's unhappy lot on Friday seemed destined to be carried away untouched - but the doctor had ordered it. Down went the beef tea.

After a while Camillus' condition seemed to improve a little. Taking advantage of this, he asked to be taken to the basilica of Saints Peter and Paul. As may be imagined, he had another point in view also, and when they were crossing the bridge of Sant' Angelo and his eyes fell upon his beloved San Spirito, he could no longer contain himself, but begged to be allowed to go in and visit the sick. Leaning on two of the religious, he feebly made his way to the door, where he was met by officials and nurses, all exclaiming joyfully, "Father Camillus has returned! Father Camillus has returned!"

His visit was a short one that day, for his strength was not equal to a great exertion. But a few days later, feeling stronger, he ventured upon walking to the hospital alone. This was destined to be his last visit. It was a pathetic sight, that of the holy old man trying to perform the duties that he

had loved so dearly. As usual, he passed no cot without leaving its occupant the better for a kindly word or a pious thought whispered to him.

The ground of the sick man's conscience becomes wondrously fertile and the seed dropped therein does not wither, but springs up and bears fruit a thousand-fold.

Thus, as he passed from one sufferer to another, faces brightened, rosaries were grasped more firmly, and peaceful endurance settled down upon the ward his presence had blessed. It was a remarkable fact that Camillus seemed to have transmitted to his religious by that holy fusion of ideas that often occurs in spiritually minded persons, the power to see in every patient Our Lord Himself. "I was sick and you visited Me!" became to them of real significance, and robbed their often disgusting work of half its repelling power, enabling them to persevere in their trying vocation when the spirit weakened and courage was at the lowest ebb. "I was sick and you visited Me!" Oh, what joy those words of the Master will one day give to those who have made charity for the sick a consistent and ever-present duty in their lives.

It was noted on this occasion that though his reluctance to leave the hospital was as great as usual, his visit was less lengthy. At its end he declared himself able to walk home, but the walk ended in a drive. A kind shopkeeper, seeing him pass in such a weak condition, insisted upon bringing him into the shop and calling a carriage. On reaching the convent he willingly went to bed, utterly exhausted.

The next morning, when the bell summoned the religious to go to the hospitals, one of the fathers who was passing the room of Father Camillus heard sighs and groans issuing therefrom. He entered and approaching the bed asked what was wrong.

"Dear father," said Camillus, "how sad it is that I can not go to the hospitals. Tell me the names of those who went to-day, so that I may congratulate them when they return from that holy vineyard."

After several days of severe suffering, it was decided that a consultation of physicians should be held. On its conclusion he was gently told that his disease could not be cured, though his life mighty with care, be prolonged. Immediately he pronounced most solemnly, his face illumined with heavenly joy, the words of the Psalmist: "I rejoiced at the things that were said to me; we shall go into the house of the Lord."

The superior of the house, who tried to break the news to him so tenderly, was greatly edified at his manner of receiving it. It is hard for even a good man to realize that another is ready and anxious to die, so tenaciously does the human heart cling to this life, poor worthless thing that it is.

"You are happy to hear that news, it seems, dear father?"

"And why should I not be happy," replied Camillus, "for it is the best news I could hear. A man must once pay the forfeit of death, and I do not value this life at a farthing, if only Our Lord will give me a little corner in paradise; nor do I any longer give myself any uneasiness about the Order, for God will raise up men to assist and defend it!"

Then for our saint began that time of wise and worthy preparation for the last joyous journey. Surely he could not doubt that he had sent before a rich harvest of good works, yet he began in a most humble and lowly spirit to ask prayers of others as if he were the greatest sinner upon earth. In the moments he could spare from his almost perpetual prayers he sent to all the convents and

communities of religious begging them to remember him in all their prayers. To those ladies and gentlemen who had assisted him in the different cities in which he had labored he wrote, asking them to assist him by their prayers in life and death, promising to "repay them with interest" as soon as God should grant him a place in heaven.

The far-sighted wisdom of this deed was proved when the answers to his requests came pouring in, promises of hundreds of Masses. This most heavenly ingenuity seemed to suggest to this holy soul ways and means of increasing his store of grace by good works, doing what he could himself; what he could not do, begging others to do for him. A brother who was to make his solemn profession he sent for the night before that he might tell the young man what a "monster" he was, and at the same time asked him, after making the holy vows, to obtain God's forgiveness for him. Every evening he got some of the fathers to come to his room to recite the Litanies, while he responded, with hands devoutly joined and eyes closed. His room was over the refectory, and one evening it occurred to him that by placing his ear to the floor he might hear the spiritual reading that was going on during supper. Accordingly, he managed, with some inconvenience, to get his head so near to the floor that he could hear the reader quite distinctly. In the spiritual feast that he was thus able to provide for himself he found ample compensation for the pain and trouble it gave him to hold himself in a very uncomfortable position.

Illness and Death

For many weeks the illness of Father Camillus dragged on, confining him always to his room, but permitting him the privilege of hearing Mass there. Unmindful of pain and weakness, he arose each morning and, with superhuman strength, remained kneeling until the Holy Sacrifice was over. Then he was helped to return to bed, where he made a long thanksgiving, motionless and alone, for he permitted no one to enter his room during those precious moments when, prostrate in spirit before the Most High, he was pouring his heart out in thanksgiving for all the graces God had given him in his reckless youth; for the light that had enabled him to discover his madness and the strength to overcome it. Then he prayed for his Order, thanking the good God for all that had been accomplished, and asking that it might ever be preserved in its first spirit of fervor, and that it might increase and spread wherever there should be souls to save and bodies to heal.

One day it occurred to Father Camillus that he was altogether too comfortable, too well off in a private room, with a chair and a chest of drawers - the top of which did table and general utility service. It would be more in accordance with the spirit of holy poverty, he thought, to share the common infirmary with the other sick members. Besides, he might then, perhaps, have a chance to do some little act for his sick brethren. So, supported by the prefect and the infirmarian, he made his painful way to the place which his spirit of poverty and humility had suggested as a fitting one for his last days.

Thus he contrived to yield up the only comfort his room had afforded him, a little privacy with which to hold sweet

communion with his Master, now beckoning him nearer day by day.

When it became known that Father Camillus was passing through his last days, priests and laymen thronged to the house to receive his blessing. Patiently he received them all and had a few pious words for each. All were impressed and edified at finding the venerable old man in the common infirmary, a wretchedly poor room without even the ordinary conveniences needful for the sick. Very few of the visitors left the house without securing some little article that his hand had touched. Indeed, everything that he handled or used promptly disappeared from the room and never returned. One of the brothers procured a great many rosaries like the one Camillus used and each day changed the one that hung on the bedpost; but this pious fraud was discovered after a while and Camillus insisted on keeping the rosary under his pillow thereafter.

Feeling that he was failing rapidly, he asked to be fortified by the last sacraments. This was granted, the Holy Viaticum being administered by Cardinal Ginnasi, who had requested the privilege. Camillus had always taken care that a festival of our Blessed Mother should be chosen whenever there was a ceremony or function to be performed in any of his houses, that Our Lady might have the participants under her special protection. All her feast-days were kept with loving devotion and no opportunity of honoring her was lost. True to his practice, then, he desired that the administration of the holy oils should take place on the 2d of July, the feast of the Visitation.

Surrounded by the fathers and brothers, he was prepared for his last journey, making the while the most sincere and heartfelt protestations that he was but a miserable sinner, who had done no good in his life and who could hope for

nothing but through the mercy of God and the merits of the Precious Blood. When all was over and he had made his usual devout thanksgiving, he sent for the religious to assemble again that he might say a few words to them. Then he exhorted them with great earnestness to fervor and perseverance; to keep the rule in its entirety; to serve the sick with that lowly spirit that Christ Himself had taught them by His example; to be assured that while the spirit of union and brotherly love was preserved among them the Order would be safe. Then he went on to say that they must not be disheartened by attacks from without; the devil would doubtless do his best to prevent souls from being saved, as he had always done, and their mission was to rescue as many as possible from his possession. Their Order, he said, was still young, and difficulties were to be expected, but God would be with them, for He had promised it. As for any regrets they might have at his leaving them, he begged that they would dismiss them, for if God pleased to admit him among the elect he could do far more for them than ever upon earth.

"What have I ever done," he concluded, "what have I ever done but commit sins and imperfections!" He took the hand of the father general, who stood near him, and raised it reverently to his lips. "O my father and dear brethren," he said, "I beg God's mercy and your pardon for the bad example I have so often given. It proceeded, I assure you, from ignorance rather than ill-will."

With an effort he raised his hand and gave them, so far as God permitted, "a thousand benedictions." All his hearers knelt at these words and many of them, strong men that they were, wept honest tears for this kind father, who had been to them guide, protector, and friend. One by one they approached to take leave of him and ask his pardon, kissing his hand, with the firm conviction that they were

reverencing the hand of one of God's own saints. After this he was told that some gentlemen wished to be admitted, but he was completely exhausted and was obliged, with many regrets, to decline to see them. The infirmarian, full of zeal for the welfare of other souls, was for admitting them for a brief visit, but Father Camillus said:

"Father Marcello, we can only die once, so I must try to do it well. Tell the gentlemen that I have just received the holy oils and would like to be left to myself a little."

Camillus had had now all the helps that the Church could afford him save one; he longed for the last benediction of the Sovereign Pontiff, with its plenary indulgence, so consoling to men of faith in their last moments. Accordingly a messenger was despatched to His Holiness, who at once sent Signor Luca Antonio Eustachi to bestow the crowning gift. Now were his thanks to God for having permitted him to die in Rome redoubled, and to the Holy Father he sent words of gratitude for the great joy given him in his last moments. "May Our Lord grant many years of life to His Holiness!" he exclaimed, "and may he go on in God's grace from well to better."

The next few days were days of unremitting prayer, interrupted only by the visits of religious of many Orders; for the sanctity of the founder of the Ministers of the Sick was known to all and they thronged to receive his blessing. Notwithstanding his great weakness, he saw and spoke to all who came, repeating over and over how much he was in need of God's mercy and their prayers. Once he said to one of the fathers, "Everybody comes to recommend himself to my prayers, as if I were somebody; they do not know that I am a vile sinner."

"But their faith will be regarded," replied the father.

"The Lord God grant that they do not lose the reward of their good will," said Father Camillus.

An act which he had written declaring that he was a son of the Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church and believed all that she taught, he kept constantly near him and desired that after he died it should be buried with him. An opportunity of gaining an indulgence had never escaped him, and now his arms were covered with medals which he had tied on them and which he kissed repeatedly. But chief among the objects that consoled his dying hours was the crucifix.

Since the days of tribulation in San Giacomo, when he and his little following of pious brethren had been ordered to disband and take their crucifix elsewhere, his devotion to Christ Crucified had been constant and sincere. After the Blessed Sacrament itself the crucifix was his refuge. In the hour of doubt or of danger he had sought his crucified Saviour with a most perfect confidence and had never failed of relief. More than once in these early days Christ had spoken to him from the cross. At one time kneeling before it, seeking strength in the hour of deep affliction, Camillus had seen the hands reach toward him and had plainly heard the words, "Why art thou troubled, O coward? Persevere in the work and I will help thee, for this is My work and not thine."

It is not strange, then, that the impulse to turn to the crucifix and address Our Lord thereon became a habit in Camillus' life. Neither is it wonderful that in response to such appeals God sent His angels in various guises, as the chronicles of his Order affirm, to relieve the needs of His servant.

As the slow and torturing days passed and the sick man's vitality ebbed, his patience and confidence in God's goodness in permitting that he should suffer thus increased.

When the pain in his infected leg became almost unbearable, the only sign that he gave was a tightening of the lips, which gradually widened into a holy smile of gladness that there was more to suffer. When he cried out, "More water!" it was not relief for the agonizing thirst that consumed him, but that the priest who held the aspersorium might sprinkle him again with the water that would deliver him from the powers of darkness; when he was "Cold - icy cold!" it was not with the chill of winter or of death; God was permitting His servant to share the abandonment that was His upon the cross.

For many years he had suffered five distinct physical ailments that gave him no peace. He called them His "five graces," and would seek relief for none. He knew that they would never cause his death, but would infinitely increase his store of merit. These ailments, so long neglected, now added their quota to his racked frame, proving themselves indeed five graces.

When the happy morning dawned of the day that was to be his last upon earth, such exclamations escaped him as assured his attendants that this fact had been made known to him by the Dispenser of such heavenly secrets. To those who were preparing the infirmary altar for the Holy Sacrifice he said, "This is the last Mass I shall hear.** While it was in progress, and especially during that part of the Credo which recalled the passion of his Saviour, he gave every sign of devout attention, and was moved, as allusion to the Passion always moved him. During the first Memento his eyes, with an expression of pitiful pleading, sought those who were about him and he exclaimed aloud, "Pray, pray now that the Lord may save me!" It was the last attack of the foe; henceforward all was to be peace, unutterable peace. He beckoned to his confessor and begged that he would stay by

him until all was over, so that if any imperfection should occur to him he might make it known.

The day that followed that last Mass was one of perfect union with God, though many were admitted to his room to see him before the end came. He would have none turned away, for he wished for their prayers and, although his tongue was so parched that he could scarcely speak, he could pronounce the Holy Names, and to hear him say "Jesus, Mary," was a sermon more eloquent than many a long, flowery, and well prepared discourse. He had always prayed that he might retain consciousness to the very end, and this was granted. Surely this devout man, who had assisted so many souls to prepare for that last awful moment, who had helped to wrest from the powers of evil the coveted treasure for which they had waited so confidently, surely this man might hope that in his own last agony multitudes of those souls would be present to make secure by their intercession his passing to eternal rest. He, the man who had compassion on the needy and the poor, should have no doubt, no fear, for the Psalmist had declared him "blessed."

Shortly after the evening Ave, to which he responded distinctly, the infirmarian asked him if he would not like something refreshing.

"Wait a quarter of an hour and then I shall be refreshed."

It was as he said. Fifteen minutes later he stretched out his arms in the form of a cross and with an expression of ineffable peace and joy exclaimed, "O most Precious Blood! O Jesus! O Mary!"

Thus closed a life which from the moment of its regeneration had been inspired and guided in a work, the most important

with which a human being could be entrusted, that of preparing men's souls for the critical moment which defines the whole purpose and end of their creation and decided their eternal destiny.

The Spirit of Saint Camillus

Who can picture the scenes that took place next morning in the streets about the church of the Maddalena and the convent of the Ministers of the Sick? From the earliest dawn the people were hurrying from all quarters, for it had already gone abroad that Father Camillus was dead. A "saint" dead in their midst! Why should they not make haste to reach him, lest his body be transported in some mysterious way to paradise and no opportunity be given them to satisfy their devotion? Would not this friend of God make powerful intercession for them? Clearly they must reach him as quickly as possible.

In the convent they had hoped to keep the precious remains quietly with them for a day, at least, and offer constant prayers for and to the good father, who would be so sorely missed among them, but they saw at once that it was not to be thought of. Hastily the body was arrayed in vestments and taken to the church.

Though the fathers had some idea of what might happen, they were wholly unprepared for what actually followed. The crowd gathered around the bier, eagerly kissing the hands and feet and even the face of the holy one, touching the body with rosaries, handkerchiefs, flowers, and all available objects. Some even drew the rings from their fingers and loaded the emaciated hands of Camillus with them.

The most perfect reverence was preserved and such restraint as could be exercised under the conditions; still, the fathers, finding that even the vestments were being cut, with a mighty effort succeeded in driving back the surging, wailing mob long enough to permit the use of a pious device. The body was covered with evergreens and bay

leaves, which were then distributed to the people. This process seemed to satisfy, but though it was repeated again and again, it failed to meet the demand. The throng and its enthusiasm increased so that at last it was found necessary to remove the body to the sacristy, and finally to place a guard of soldiers around the room.

During three days they came and went, the anxious crowd seeking spiritual and temporal favors, health for soul and body. In many instances cures were declared and other favors obtained, which were attested later. At the end of these exciting days the ceremonies with which the Church inters her children were carried out in the presence of hosts of people from far and near.

When the body was being enclosed in its three caskets, two of cypress and one of lead, it surprised none to find that Nature had departed from her usual course in dealing with this man. The hand of corruption was not to be laid on those limbs, still flexible and perfectly free from the dread signs of death.

"He was - he was a saint," they cried; "behold the sweetness of his countenance."

Many declared that their hearts were filled with holy desires in merely gazing upon it. Notorious sinners, they said, had actually been drawn to make long deferred confessions. Grace was descending in veritable showers upon the church of the Maddalena.

* * *

While our "saint" rests peacefully near its altar, the Church, ever alive to the final issue where such lives are concerned, proceeds to investigate his claims to holiness. Such actions usually progress slowly, so while we await the glorious

tidings that are to crown our waiting, we may call to mind briefly the life of our saint and we shall discover that Three Loves dominated it. They were:

1. The Blessed Sacrament.

2. The Crucifix.

3. The Precious Blood.

First Love - the Blessed Sacrament

When for the first time Camillus, priest, stood at the altar of God and raised aloft the newly consecrated host, his eager eyes followed it with an insatiable longing to do something that would prove his loving gratitude for the power to perform that act.

"My Lord, my Love, what can I do for Thee?"

And the answer surely came. It came whenever it was his joy to communicate to the sick or dying that "Love" of his. Who can doubt that, spending the greater part of his life at the hospitals or in the homes of the dying, the answer was a stupendous one.

Every night spent at the hospital had its generous share of minutes before the Blessed Sacrament. No duty was commenced without a visit to the Silent Watcher to seek help and guidance.

Was the Holy Viaticum about to be administered, then Camillus was near with radiant face and helpful prayers. The tinkle of the bell that announced the going forth of the Lord always found him ready to follow, though often he was seen to cover the distance to be walked on his knees:

What a loving duty it was to prevent desecration of the Blessed Sacrament in the wards, a desecration that so often threatened in those days. The sick would sometimes cough immediately after receiving the Host, as on one occasion when a particle flew from the mouth in which it had just been placed. With incredible swiftness Camillus, who was kneeling near the chaplain, opened his hands and reverently received it, quickly transferring it to a corporal. After the chaplain had passed, Camillus would stay by the patient, praying with him and suggesting holy thoughts.

When with daybreak the moment came for his Mass, nothing could equal the joy with which he hastened to the preparation for it. Then kneeling at the foot of the altar, he made the daily intention for the Church and the Sovereign Pontiff, always first in his solicitude; next, for his Order, that God might be pleased to grant its increase, and the holiness of its members; lastly for the sick, that it might be his happiness to help and comfort countless souls and obtain strength and hope for the dying. Angels surely gathered about that altar, for never was Mass celebrated with greater fervor. Often tears streamed down his cheeks, as at the precious moment he held in his hands his "Love," his Lord, and he would whisper again, "What can I do for Thee?"

Second Love - the Crucifix

Next to the Blessed Sacrament, the love of Camillus was for the crucifix. To see him passing with bared head and giant strides through the streets of the Ripetta, clasping in his arms the large one just ordered out of the hospital of San Giacomo was proof enough of this.

People fell upon their knees, almost as if it were the Blessed Sacrament. Oh! If they could have seen him, after reaching a place of refuge, kneeling before it weeping bitter tears that

his Lord should suffer such treatment, surely their hearts would have been touched. Yet more so could they have seen the Christ detach His arms from the cross and reach out to console His servant, as He did more than once.

In all his houses a crucifix was conspicuously placed near the entrance, so that the religious might not fail to salute it upon entering and leaving the house. He had a passionate desire that every one should honor it. Traveling in Lombardy one time, in a mixed company, Camillus observed that one man in the party took great care to keep his eyes turned from the crucifix that he wore upon his breast. Seeing this, the servant of God concluded that the man was a Jew, and he determined, with that old spirit of persistence of his, that the man should look at that crucifix. This performance was repeated several times, until Camillus at last shouted angrily, "Perfidious and obstinate man, how dare you refuse to look upon the holy crucifix! Did not the fear of the Lord restrain me, I would this moment throw you into that ditch by the roadside." The poor Jew, looking up at the stalwart Christian (then in the early days of his conversion and zealous fervor), was much frightened, and doubting not Camillus' ability, as well as his will to do it, discreetly withdrew from the party at the first opportunity.

Camillus never left the bedside of the patients without presenting the crucifix to be kissed. He used to teach them the last words of Saint Felix, the Capuchin, "Jesus, Jesus, take my heart and return it to me no more."

What joy it gave him to see a young girl, whom he was assisting in her last moments, embrace the crucifix, pressing her lips to the wounded side as she repeated, "Jesus, Jesus, take my heart and return it no more," adding, "Pardon me my sins by Thy holy arms extended upon the cross."

Many years later a certain devout priest expressed in the following verses thoughts which it would have been a joy for Camillus to have used in his visits to the sick:

Jesus, my King, I have crucified Thee,
  Now it is Thy turn to crucify me.

Make Thou the cross, be it only like Thine;
  Mix Thou the gall so Thy love be the wine.

Shrink not to strip me of all but Thy grace,
  Stretch me out well till I fit in Thy place.

Here are my hands, felon hands, and my feet.
  Drive home the nails. Lord, the pain will be sweet.

Raise me, and take me not down till I die;
  Only let Mary, my mercy, stand by.

Last, while I live, let the spear do its part.
  Right through the heart, my King, right through the heart.

In all dangers or moments of difficulty the crucifix was in Camillus' hand. More than once in those lawless times he stood fearlessly before mobs of depraved soldiers, holding aloft the crucifix, and rebuking them in such terms that his companions feared they would tear him to pieces. Somehow, though, it always ended in a softening of the hearts of those dissolute men, and the conversion of many of them.

Third Love - the Precious Blood

He was convinced that it was only through the merits of that saving blood that it would be possible for him to hope. If he felt in the least tempted to despond, he would look up to his heavenly Father with the confidence that a child might place in a kind father. "My Lord," he would say softly, "Thy blood

must save me. Hast Thou not promised glorious things to those who perform works of mercy for the sick? To be sure, I have been such a sinner that, should I have to bear the pains of purgatory till the day of judgment, it would be no more than I deserve. But there is Thy precious blood. Lord! There is Thy precious blood!"

Works of art had little attraction for Camillus. The "Crucifixion" of a Rubens or an Angelo might be powerful to arouse devotion in others, but for him there was just one painting that could do it adequately. He had had a large picture made that was to be before his eyes when he was dying. He had designed it and described it to the artist himself:

"There must be an angel at each side of the Christ, with a chalice to catch the precious drops, which two other angels must present to the Eternal Father and the Holy Spirit above the cross. At the foot of the cross paint the Mother of God and Saint Michael, the defender of the dying. Underneath, the inscription, 'Spare Thy servant whom Thou hast redeemed by Thy most precious blood.' Plenty of blood," he cried, "for it is for the sins of Camillus, the unworthy one, and there must be plenty of it, and make it a bright red so that my poor dying eyes may easily see it and have reason for confidence."

He was never tired reminding his brethren and those whom he instructed that all their confidence must be in the precious blood. It was the symbol of God's mercy, their chief reason for hope. He told them that although the devil often tempted him with scruples, tempted him with distrust, and troubled him with anxieties and fears, yet he never allowed himself to be cast down, but would turn to our Lord and remind him of the glorious things He had promised to those who perform works of mercy for the sick. "Let not our souls

be torn by cowardice or despair. Let the precious blood be all our hope."

The Practice of Heroic Virtue

Founders of religious Orders, those great souls capable of rising to such lofty heights in spirituality, have ever found in poverty a means of enabling them to rise above all undue attachment to the material things of this world. Thus we find Saint Francis rejoicing because he had been deprived of his patrimony, and mounting a step higher in the Scala Sancta of perfection.

Like Saint Ignatius and Saint Vincent de Paul, Saint Camillus found greater delight in the practice of poverty than men of the world do in hoarding up or squandering wealth. The patched and shabby clothes that he usually wore bore testimony to the indifference he felt - rather, to the real pleasure it gave him - to wear patches and look what he aspired to be - a poor man for Christ's sake.

He loved cleanliness and would have his followers bear in mind that those whom they had to serve would be much better served in clean and comely garments. "Patch upon patch," he would say; "it is not the habit, but the monk that makes the religious."

That Camillus was always loath to put on new clothing is clearly shown in one instance. He was staying at Ferrara and the fathers there were much distressed by the shabbiness of his clothes, especially as it would be necessary for him to confer with some of the nobility during his visit. Knowing how useless it would be to remonstrate about it, they took matters into their own hands. One of them entered his cell after he had retired for the night and with much caution removed the habit he had worn, leaving in its place a fine new one. He said little the next morning, but there was a look in his eye that told them that he knew more than he

said. Glancing at each other, the fathers waited and wondered what the outcome would be.

Returning to the house after a brief absence that morning, Camillus went to the father minister and said, "Come, now, quick, father, get the habit that I wore yesterday, for a messenger will be here for this in a short time and I shall have to go to bed if you do not."

"Why, father, what are you going to do with it?" asked the crestfallen minister.

"Would you have me strut around here in fine clothes while one of the fathers sits upon a box for a chair and another goes to bed in the dark for want of a lamp? You must have necessaries and I have sold the habit to buy them."

During another visit to one of the houses a little delicacy was offered him at the table, on account of his weak, sore leg. He set the morsel promptly but firmly aside and asked to be served as the others were. At Messina he refused even to taste of Fra Giovanni Tomasso's choice portion of soup flavored with a little cinnamon. The good procurator was much chagrined when he asked if all the soup was flavored alike. Upon answering that it was not, he was ordered not only to take it off, but to take the discipline himself that night. The poor young father did so, secretly preferring the sting of the lash to the humiliation in the refectory.

Father Camillus' cell was a model for all; one common wooden table with writing materials, a few books, two or three prints, a crucifix, a bed, and a few rush chairs. Long before he was ordained or thought of founding an Order, he was accustomed to the practice of poverty. In his first days at San Giacomo he could never see any one in want while a single sou burned in his pocket. He never laid aside

anything for his own wants nor even wondered if there would be any wants. The small piece of property in Bacchianico that became his upon the death of his mother's heirs was sold and the proceeds given to the poor of the place.

A certain advocate once gave the procurator, who had been sent to him for an alms, a much larger one than was at all usual, and, indeed, larger than the man intended to give. Camillus suspected this to be the case and immediately sent the messenger back with it, telling him to point out the mistake. The worthy alms-giver was delighted to see the brother back, it must be confessed, for he had discovered his mistake. He resolved to make it up, however, and sent word to Camillus that not only was the entire alms his, but that he might thereafter send his procurator for an alms each month; that in fact he would become a constant benefactor of the Order. Not satisfied with this, he sounded far and wide the praise of the honesty of him of whom he had heard much and whom he doubted not to be a saint.

The incident just related is akin to one showing Camillus' fine sense of discrimination and his determination to cheat no man. A messenger who had been sent to a certain prelate for an alms was asked upon his return what he had said to the great man. "I said we were in great need," said the messenger, bent upon showing what a wise procurator he was.

"Take it back at once," said Camillus, "and tell him that though we are in want, we are not in great want." The lesson was not lost upon the procurator, who, as he retraced his weary steps, reflected that it were better to have secured a small alms than to have brought upon himself this humiliation.

In his instructions to the novices of his Order Father Camillus used to tell them that there was but one way to avoid "Chiappino," as he called the devil, and it was to keep as far away from possible roads to temptation as they could. He himself avoided even the sight of women as being special agents of "Chiappino." "Lady benefactresses" were his chief abhorrence. When one such came to confer with him he entered the room and sat down at a considerable distance. The lady drew near, whereupon the father moved his chair back, and she again and he again, until they were half across the room and Camillus was feeling decidedly cross.

At another time he was passing through the streets with one of the fathers when a carriage containing a wealthy lady, who had given large donations to the house, drew near. The lady stopped the carriage and beckoned to his companion. The hand-clasp with which she greeted him was a prolonged one which he could not avoid, but his superior stood by with blazing eyes, mentally rating the "simplicity" or "stupidity" of one who could not escape such an exhibition. He could not wait to reach home, but, after the lady had passed on, stopped to deliver part of his mind, which he completely unburdened at the end of the walk. His indignation knew no bounds and he talked for a long time with much force and vigor, giving a severe penance to the offender, who, indeed, had it not been for the intercession of one of the fathers, would have been sent at once from the Order.

Camillus would have the minds of his religious so free from anything that might tarnish their purity that he gave very large penances for what seemed very small faults, as when he heard of one of the lately professed religious expressing himself among his brethren as having a wife now and needing no other. This form of expression did not strike Father Camillus as being a fitting one, and, calling the

young man, he rebuked him very severely and prescribed a fast of bread and water for the day.

One might think that our saint was utterly devoid of feeling and that he had no tenderness in his heart, nothing but severity for weakness of any kind. There was no form of human weakness that he could not compassionate except sin. Censure was freely given when need be, but sympathy and compassion were always ready for those whom he knew to stand in need of it. The fathers and young novices knew his ways and were sure to go to him for spiritual aid and as easily for the temporal assistance they might find necessary. The readiness of his heart to respond to every demand made upon it had been often and well tested. Even to helpless animals his heart always warmed. Traveling toward Abruzzo one day he heard a newly born lamb bleating in a ditch where it had been abandoned by the shepherd. Dismounting, he took the little creature and placed it tenderly on his shoulders, thinking all the while of the innocent Lamb, Jesus, and carried it until he came up to the shepherd, to whom he restored it.

Camillus was always alive to the sufferings of the helpless creatures of the street. In the Isle of Ischia he found a dog with a broken leg and knowing what it was to have a "bad leg," he fed the little creature with his own hand for as many days as he stayed in the place, and upon leaving asked some one to care for it. "If I were half as faithful as he to my Master, I should have no fear in meeting Him," he said.

Not the least among dumb creatures, not an inanimate object, but had its attraction and its lesson for this man of God. Music as an indulgence he never permitted himself, but if he could use it in his ministrations to souls - ah, that was different. A religious who was walking in the convent garden playing upon a lute merely to amuse himself was

reprimanded very severely. But when it was going badly with a sick man who refused to listen to conversation on any subject but hunting or fishing or sport of some kind, Camillus had a domestic with a lute placed in an adjoining room. He then set himself patiently to draw the dying man's thoughts to more heavenly things and gradually by the grace of God and the influence of the sweet, low music won him to sentiments of piety and finally to ask for the sacraments.

Saint Camillus would have been the first in a campaign against the present immodest styles among women. Even in those remote days the devil was busy devising schemes of dress and millinery wherewith to inspire the feminine mind to the ruin of many a soul. Fasts and instruments of penance were not enough to expiate the sins induced by the vain dress of women. He never missed a chance to speak of it in public.

Once four ladies called to ask spiritual aid. At first he was disposed to see them, but as he drew near and saw that they were fashionably garbed he merely saluted them and passed on, hastening his footsteps to find the prefect who had sent him to them, that he might give him a sound rating. The words, "Pierce Thou my flesh with Thy fear" were written large in his heart. He thought no pains too great to avoid temptation and would have his religious meditate often upon death and hell as correctives.

It will be remembered that in the early days of his conversion Camillus was disposed to love his own will and way, therefore to see him shaping his soul to the demands of holy obedience was truly a marvel. Saint Philip Neri, from the secure haven of eternity, must have looked on* rejoicing at the very perfect work that was developing from an almost hopeless subject.

In the beginning it was necessary that this man who designed to form a religious Order should assume authority. Only a tremendous amount of humility can govern safely and Camillus proved himself to possess all the requirements. He was always careful to submit himself personally to the directions of superiors in houses that he was visiting, and to the companions of his journeys. Even after resigning the generalship he was careful never to leave the house without asking, on his knees, the superior's blessing. His letters were all submitted to whosoever might be in authority. His scrupulosity extended to the thousand and one minute observances of a religious community. After his death scraps of paper with written permissions were found sown freely among his documents. Indeed, one would almost imagine that his director must have been constantly at hand. One paper certified that he need not eat in the evening nor in the morning if he judged it proper not to do so; another that he might take the discipline every day; still another that he might visit the sick religious, eat at the second table when he was too late for the first, allow the fathers and brothers to come to his room to speak to him - all, even the least action, must have the sanction of obedience. A word, a sign, a bell was sufficient to send him here or there with perfect docility.

Asked what he should do if he were told to stay in his room instead of going to the hospital, he answered promptly, "Of course I should obey, otherwise I should not be a religious, but a beast."

When a tailor came to measure him for a new cloak he thought he did not want one, but when a brother standing near reminded him that the man was sent by the superior, he found that it made no difference what he thought and exclaimed, "Make me one of velvet if such is the will of holy obedience."

"What does God care for mortification and penance," he would say, "if we can not renounce self-will?"

To a religious who called in a doctor to prescribe exemption from a distasteful journey to Rome on the plea of ill health, Camillus gave profound reasons why he should consider an order of obedience more important even than a doctor's order. "With a mule, a saddle, a pair of boots and spurs, we shall overcome your distemper on the morrow," he said. And sure enough, when Camillus rode forth the next morning, the young religious, who was of the heroic mold, was by his side. Later in his religious life he used to thank God for this wholesome bit of discipline. But it must not be thought that Camillus was hard of heart or disposed to treat his religious severely. He well knew the lengths to which self-love will go to have its way; and also knew what a blessing he was conferring in demanding obedience in the face of all odds.

Observance of the rules of community life he considered indispensable to all from first to last. Owing to the multiple duties of the generalship he might easily have dispensed himself from community exercises, but he sought no exemptions, answered every bell with perfect regularity, and kept silence like the lowliest novice in training; in fact, observed every rule from the greatest to the least. This was the more remarkable because of the frequent absences that his hospital duties made necessary. Here, however, was where his own obedience shone with special luster. He loved the hospital and the duties there with an absorbing love, yet he never permitted them to detain him one instant after the bell calling to the convent had sounded.

The same exactness of observance he demanded of all. When it became known to him that ten of the brothers had taken refreshments at one of the hospitals, an act strictly forbidden by the rules, he sent at once for them all. After

reading to them the chapter on this subject, he was seized with a transport of righteous indignation and throwing down the book of rules, stamped upon it, crying, "What is the use of these rules if they are not kept?" Then without further ado he dismissed the offenders from the Order, judging that the community could gain nothing by the absence of such refractory members.

It would seem at such times that this master in the religious life was without compassion; that men must hold aloof from one whose harshness and severity made him too hard a taskmaster. There are few natures that can bear the strain of a hand too heavy, the feeling of constant oppression is likely to induce a benumbing of effort and thus the very end sought is frustrated. But Camillus was far from being too severe with his religious, as it might appear. "Serve the Lord in gladness" was a versicle that he was forever quoting to the young religious. He loved to see them happy and cheerful about their tasks and would often dispel the clouds from a frowning face by merely laying his hand upon the head. He could even be merry himself when the occasion warranted, though without sacrificing an iota of the modesty and dignity of his accustomed demeanor.

The secret of the saint's success with the virtue of obedience was without doubt his humility. General of the Order, advanced in age and first in sanctity, he was still the last and least in the house. Who could imagine this man washing dishes, serving in the refectory, sweeping, answering the door-bell, performing every lowliest duty demanded of the last brother in the house? A carrier of mortar for the builders and of wood to help the wood-sellers, he scorned no employment, however humble. Indeed, he was often blamed for permitting himself to degrade his office in that way. Cardinal Salviati, the protector of the Order, finding him on one occasion occupied in what he considered an unbefitting

employment, gave him a severe scolding, which he accepted with the utmost humility.

A wealthy lady, in whose home he had been assisting a dying man, insisted upon sending him home in a carriage when he was ready to go. Finding all remonstrance vain, he was forced to accept the courteous act. As they were passing through the street there was a man who was crying that he was very ill and no one believed him. Camillus was at once filled with compassion and ordered the driver to stop. Then he invited the man to share the carriage with him, and used all his persuasive powers to induce him to do so. "I assure you," he said, with grave sweetness, "that I am not one of the rich. I am a poor man just like you." The sick man firmly declined the offer and Camillus was forced to move on, looking back in genuine distress as long as the noisy invalid was in sight.

A poor man once met him in a street of Rome and began to cry out, "Long live Father Camillus!" repeating it again and again. In the greatest distress, the object of this unwonted attention hurried forward to stay the outcries. "What is the matter with you, good friend? What have I ever done to you? Be quiet!"

"Do you not remember, father, when you were superintendent at Saint Giacomo, I had a broken thigh, which no one could cure? You cured it by your prayers." Then he resumed his litany of "Long live Father Camillus!"

"It was Almighty God who cured you. Now stop, all this noise," said Camillus, hastening to get out of reach of the pean of praise that the man persisted in rendering. "That poor man," he said afterward to his companion, "was at San Giacomo thirty-five years ago. I remember him well. They had the instruments ready to cut off his 1eg when Almighty

God was pleased to heal him. See his gratitude, and we accept God's best gifts often without giving proper thanks!"

We might take up the virtues one after another and show that Camillus was proficient in all. The incidents that are recorded in the annals of his Order are so numerous and so remarkable that we have chosen a mere half dozen to illustrate a few of his virtues. They will serve to show the nature of his piety.

It should be remembered that he was not a man of learning, but it must have been God's design to enlighten him for the work with which He had entrusted him or he would never have been able to accomplish it. He believed himself to be profoundly ignorant and after he had resigned the generalship and joined the ranks, he procured a copy of Cardinal Bellarmine's little catechism of Christian Doctrine, which he kept always by him, reading and studying it most faithfully.

He did not desire that the men who joined him should be especially learned. In truth, he preferred that scientific studies should have a secondary place in their esteem. He was fond of quoting to them, "O Paris, Paris, you have cooled my love for Assisi."

If he saw signs of relaxation among his sons he was quick to perceive that the tiny silver thread of mortification was running low, and he was by no means slow to apply proper pressure. Thus the spirit that he wished to see among his sons was before his death an accomplished fact.

Miracles

When a Supreme Pontiff determines to enter upon that tremendous undertaking, the making of a saint, he is probably quite convinced that his will not be the hand that will sign the final decree. As a rule the process of investigating the life of the one proposed is a long one, often sustained through centuries, but once proposed never for an instant lost sight of by the vigilant eye of the successor of Peter until carried to a usually happy conclusion.

Benedict XIV, that zealous and active pontiff, full of admiration for the character and works of Camillus de Lellis, did more for the cause of his canonization than any of the twelve Popes during whose pontificates it was pending. The first, however, to light the torch that was destined to glow through more than a century of research was Urban VIII. Eleven years the body of Camillus had lain in the crypt of the church of the Maddalena when, on the eighth of March, 1625, the wonderful order to exhume it was heard.

Men's breath came fast to see a body, after more than a decade of interment, as fresh and beautiful as if but yesterday it had life, flexible, smiling, perfect in every feature and member. A surgeon bidden to make an incision in the side, did so, and oh, wonder of wonders! there flowed forth a liquid of such fragrance as may be distilled only from the flowers that grow in heavenly gardens. It continued to flow during the six days that the body was kept above ground, and people came and went, witnessing the miracle with tears and prayers and invocations to the saint.

Ah, most holy Camillus, wise to the things of the future, now art thou repaid for thy patient endurance of malodorous

hospital wards, and the tainted atmosphere so often and so bravely encountered in the discharge of God's work!

The first whose faith responded to the wonderful sight was Margarita, a Bolognese woman. Seizing a little four-year-old child, her nephew, in her arms, she rushed through the guard that surrounded the bier and placed the child upon it. The little Giovannino had suffered from a diseased arm during almost the whole of his short life. Who can imagine the joy with which the woman saw the little arm at once become fair and perfect! What wonder that mothers of crippled and distorted children flocked with them to this place of healing! They, too, speedily found their faith rewarded. Epilepsy with fearful complications lost its power over a little boy of four years; and the poor, pitiful little dumb object, almost consumed from the fever of his various ailments, was restored to his mother's arms in the tranquil sleep of perfect health.

Children were not the only ones to profit at this time of grace; these were only the first of miracles so numerous that it would be impossible to give even a brief description of them. More than a hundred years passed before the decree of canonization was proclaimed, and during these years innumerable favors were examined, many of them of a most marvelous character, and in most cases well authenticated. Still, only a few of these were destined to decide the final issue.

Examined by the stern and uncompromising Congregation of Rites, a miracle must be assured indeed before it may be added to the evidence for the beatification of a servant of God. Minute and thorough are the inquiries made, impartial and unfeeling the discussions held; only an extraordinary manifestation of God's power can stand the tests to which the Church subjects the lives of the saints in the process of

canonization. Four miracles - proved beyond a doubt - are required before a servant of God may be raised for the veneration of the faithful, but those assured of Saint Camillus de Lellis are so numerous that it would take many volumes to describe them all. We give here a few only, for the satisfaction of those in whom devotion to the saint has been aroused or for the interest of others who always delight in reading all that is told of the miracles of a process such as we are following. We give them from the annals of the Ministers of the Sick almost as they are recorded.

* * *

Guiseppe Smeralde, a little boy of four years, had never been able to articulate a single word, and was also afflicted by a complication of maladies, which resisted all remedies. He was fearfully contracted from the waist down and was subject to frequent epileptic convulsions, while a slow fever which consumed him insensibly, boiled in his veins. So extreme and hopeless did his condition become that his funeral garments were being prepared. His fond mother could not, however, bear the thought of losing the child and in a frenzy of faith and motherly devotion, she seized him in her arms and rushed to the tomb of Saint Camillus. She passed the child many times over the grave and then laid him on it. He instantly fell into a quiet sleep, and when he opened his eyes he had acquired the use of his limbs and his tongue as well. The fever and every other ailment had entirely disappeared. He returned home talking and walking rapidly and grew up in perfect health.

* * *

Sister Francesca Vittoria Morganti, a nun in the monastery of Santa Caterina della Rita in Rome, was suffering tortures from an enlargement of an artery. The disease was

accompanied with constant palpitation, and by spasms in the knee followed by a total contraction of the muscles, which made her wholly incapable of action. To add to her distress, she was attacked by a fever, which slowly consumed her and made her case apparently hopeless. Her doctor pronounced her cure impossible, but she turned with faith to Saint Camillus and begged for relief. In the midst of her prayers she fell into a refreshing sleep, and seemed to see the saint standing before her benignant, and ready to grant her request. "I only ask," she said, "to be delivered from this impediment, which renders me incapable of satisfying my religious obligations." Immediately she awoke and found herself restored to perfect health. Joyfully she hastened to the chapel and united with the other sisters in the common prayers. Great was the astonishment of all present and their wonder and awe became even more intense as time went on and the cure proved to be complete and permanent.

* * *

Don Giuseppe, of that cavalry regiment called "De Mignoni," in the city of Madrid, had for several years been devoted to Camillus, and it was his pious custom to carry a relic of the saint's shirt in a purse over his heart. On one occasion, while riding in a meadow outside the city, he was treacherously shot at by a wretch named Giovanni. Two balls struck Giuseppe full in the body and for an instant he thought that his last moment had come. He was not, however, so much as thrown from his horse. Neither did he feel any pain or weakness. On springing to the ground to examine himself he found a large hole burned in his uniform over his chest, one entire ball inside the purse which contained the precious relic, and another flattened outside it. Filled with wonder and gratitude for the signal intervention of his patron, he

went immediately with witnesses and made a public deposition of the miracle in the court of Madrid.

* * *

Bernardino Pegorino had for many days suffered from a malignant fever, which on the fifteenth day was declared incurable by the physicians, who said that he could live but a short time. On a suggestion that he should commend himself to Saint Camillus, he caused his picture to be brought, together with a little plaster from his room. Hardly were these things present when the fever left his body; and perceiving the instantaneous cure, he suddenly quitted his bed, and to the admiration of all present left the house, publishing everywhere the glories of his beneficent liberator.

* * *

Anna Lavinia Pieretti had, for many years, been greatly troubled by a malignant erysipelas, settled in the bone of the left knee, which was converted into a festering wound, with a very large and deep cavity, occasioning spasmodic pains, burning fever, vomitings, and contraction of the tendons of the leg, through which sufferings, and those occasioned by the remedies vainly tried by the professional men during their long attendance, she was reduced to such extremity that the last sacraments were administered. Her afflicted other wrapped a little of the plaster in a small piece of rag, and with lively confidence of Saint Camillus, bound it over the gangrened knee. Instantly the girl sprang from the bed joyfully, without pain, fever, or contraction, and was able to seat herself at table and take her meals with her family. She slept tranquilly that night, and the next day was perfectly well, the concavity of the wound being almost filled to the margin with new, living flesh, to the amazement

of the surgeon, who from the extremity in which he had seen her the day before, thought that she must have died.

* * *

Francesca Lassi, a woman of Rome, had for five years suffered from a scrofulous tumor on the left side of her neck, which greatly disfigured her. The flesh, which had grown round the orifice of this abscess, had formed, as it were, two edges, which occasioned constant spasms; besides, she was always obliged to bend her neck on one side, so that she had acquired the nickname of "Wryneck" (Colletta). The discharge from this abscess was also so pestilential as to nauseate even the professional attendants themselves, so that, having applied many ineffectual remedies, they at last gave up the case. A young man, who lived in the same house, accidentally found a packet of the plaster mentioned above, and was suddenly inspired with a desire to apply it to the relief of the unfortunate Colletta. He went to find her, and in faith applied the packet to her neck, together with a picture of the saint, with which he made the sign of the cross over the abscess. All pain instantly ceased, the ridges disappeared, the orifice of the abscess completely closed, and nothing remained but a red mark in the place where it had been.

* * *

Antonio Sabatini was extremely reduced by a violent continued fever of many months' standing, and was at last attacked by a cruel quinsy with imminent danger of death. In these circumstances he received a letter from his sister in Rome, inclosing a little mortar from the room of Saint Camillus. The invalid took it with faith, and was instantly cured, so that his answer to his sister's letter was an account of his immediate cure.

* * *

Domenicá Daviti, an old woman of seventy, was afflicted by gout in her hands and feet, together with asthma and a malignant fever, which had brought her almost to her grave. Her daughters, seeing all human remedies were unavailing, turned to the saint, to whom they earnestly commended her, and caused her to take a draught of water in which a little of the mortar had been mixed. At the ninth hour of the night Saint Camillus presented himself to the dying woman, and with a majestic and affable air saluted her three times, and said, "I have granted you the favor," saying which he disappeared. At the same moment Domenica was not only delivered from fever, but also from her habitual indispositions. She afterward recognized the features of her deliverer in a picture of the saint, and positively declared to those about her that it was he who had appeared to her in the vision.

* * *

Antonio Crescentini, who was afflicted by malignant fever, had called in our religious to aid him to die well. But when exhorted to faith in the merits of Saint Camillus, he besought his sisters to go to the sacred tomb and there commend him to the saint. They set out on the journey; but before they had arrived the fever had left him and troubled him no more.

* * *

Francesca Garzi, reduced to a most dangerous state by dropsy, after having vainly tried the most effective remedies, fervently commended herself to Saint Camillus, then applied his picture to her chest, and swallowed a little mortar from his room. She had hardly done so when she fell

into a peaceful sleep, and on awaking felt herself completely cured, to the amazement of the physician, who left in writing a full attestation of the fact.

* * *

For four whole months Giovanni Ambreselli, a physician of Castel Nuovo di San Germano, had led a suffering life, in consequence of a malignant erysipelas, which had extended over all his limbs, so that from head to foot his whole body was one entire wound. Seeing himself in extremity, and knowing that he could hope for no alleviation from human remedies, he had recourse to the protection of the saint, and while invoking him was overcome by a gentle sleep, from which in a little time he awoke completely healed, for not the smallest cicatrice was perceptible of this great wound, besides which his powers were so much invigorated that he himself could hardly credit the fact, for he seemed to have suffered no illness whatever.

* * *

Bernardino Vecchiani, a youth, was coming over the Via Flaminia in a cart loaded with stones, when he accidentally fell, and was crushed by the heavy wheel, which broke one of his shoulders and opened a deep wound in his head, which laid the skull bare. He was carried home half dead and covered with blood, and the surgeon who attended him thought the wound dangerous and most difficult of cure. His mother, therefore, full of faith in the saint, applied one of his pictures to the bandages of the wound. From that time the patient began to sleep a little, and on the next day, to the astonishment of every one, was perfectly well, only lamenting that he must remain in bed till the return of the surgeon, who at first would not credit the fact when it was related to him, but was afterward full of wonder when, on

unbinding the wounds, he, with his own eyes, saw that in a few hours the bones had been united and the wound healed, and that the youth was perfectly cured.

* * *

It will be remembered that the birth of the child Camillus de Lellis was heralded by a strange dream of his mother's and attended by many peculiar circumstances. One of these has still to be related, its importance not manifesting itself until this period of our saint's history.

On the occasion of his birth the struggle of his mother to bring forth her child was so great that she ran from her house to the stable and threw herself upon the hay. There it was that the child was born. That lowly stable at Bacchianico became, by God's providence, an oratory in the keeping of the Ministers of the Sick. Over the altar was placed a picture of the saint kneeling before a crucifix.

In the years that had passed after his death the picture had become so discolored that the figure was almost unrecognizable; thus in the growing importance which the various decrees gave to the process of canonization, the fathers determined to have the picture restored or a new one painted. Going to the spot where it was hung to decide the matter, they were astonished to find it restored by miraculous hands. Not only was it fresh and perfect in every detail, but there were changes in the original design. The saint's hands were no longer clasped as in prayer, but were joined upon his breast as in thanksgiving.

Word of this marvel was at once sent to the Archbishop, who immediately dispatched his vicar general to the scene of the prodigy. Coming later himself, and being satisfied that the report was well founded, he directed that the oratory should

be transformed into a fitting shrine. It is now considered one of the most celebrated of the sanctuaries of the Abruzzi.

* * *

The feast of Saints Peter and Paul, 1746, was the day appointed by the Church for the canonization of Saint Camillus de Lellis and great was the rejoicing among his sons, the Ministers of the Sick, wherever the Order was established.

Great also was the rejoicing in ecclesiastical circles where the cause had won interest and approval, as well as among Christian princes in Italy and elsewhere.

And so, with all the pomp and splendor that accompanies such functions, our humble saint, with four others of God*s chosen ones, tried and found worthy, was raised to the highest pinnacle to which it is given to human nature to aspire in this world. The saints who shared his honors were Saint Fidelis of Sigmaringen, Saint Catherine of Ricci, Saint Peter of Ragalato, and Saint Joseph of Leonessa.

* * *

O blessed Sebastiana, who, lingering near the tomb of Saint Camillus, heard sweet children's voices singing, "*Cantate Domino canticum novum; Laus ejus in Ecclesia Sanctorum*," thou didst indeed hear a "new song" henceforth to be sung in the Church of the saints.

A band of black-robed, red-crossed men have intoned a "new song" telling a tale the world had never heard before - how men had been striving to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ in new ways, ways that man had hitherto avoided, the personal service of the sick, the poor sick, even the plague-stricken.

Such work had hitherto been left to women or to servants, paid for doing it, and well paid, though doing it none too well. The Church Triumphant might well sing a new song from henceforth, for wherever the black robe with the red cross should appear it should be a sign that God's glory was the end sought and found, in deeds the bravest and the most humiliating it is possible for men to conceive.

About This EBook

The text of this ebook is taken from the book *Camillus de Lellis, the Hospital Saint*, by Sister Mary Camilla Lyons. The edition used was printed by Benziger Brothers, New York, New York in 1917. It included a preface that promoted the reading of the lives of saints, but was not specific to Saint Camillus, and has been omitted from this version.

It has the dedication, "To the Revered Mother Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Order of the Sisters of Mercy, who, in choosing Saint Camillus de Lellis as one of the patrons of her Order, proved her love for the work that was so dear to him and her desire that her Daughters should be animated with the spirit which guided and inspired him, this book is reverently dedicated."

It has the Imprimatur of Bishop George Albert Guertin, D.D., Diocese of Manchester, New Hampshire, and of Cardinal John Murphy Farley, Archdiocese of New York, New York, 27 January 1917.

It includes the note, "The information for this work has been drawn largely from the life of Saint Camillus de Lellis published by the Congregation of the Oratory of Saint Philip Neri, London, edition of 1850. Grateful acknowledgement is hereby made.

The cover image is a detail of an antique lithograph holy card of Saint Camillus, date and artist unknown. It was swiped from Wikimedia Commons.

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